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# THE RAINBOW

THOMAS



FRENCH'S STANDARD LIBRARY EDITION

SAMUEL FRENCH, 227 West 38th St., New York



# THE RAINBOW

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

1079  
1286

*Albert E. Thomas*  
BY  
A. E. THOMAS

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NEW YORK  
SAMUEL FRENCH  
PUBLISHER  
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON  
SAMUEL FRENCH, LTD.  
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET  
STRAND, W. C. 2

PS3539  
H54H3  
1919

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*Act of March 4, 1909.*

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FEB 26 1920

Elmer 28 Feb 1920

To My Friend,  
HENRY MILLER



## CAST OF CHARACTERS

NEIL SUMNER	
EDWARD FELLOWS.....	<i>His friend and lawyer</i>
WILLIAM MORTIMER.....	<i>His friend</i>
JAMES JUDSON.....	<i>His friend</i>
NICHOLAS HOLLINS.....	<i>His racing manager</i>
BENNETT.....	<i>His butler</i>
JOHN CARPENTER GILMORE....	<i>American Consul at Lyons</i>
RUTH SUMNER.....	<i>Neil's wife</i>
BETSY SUMNER.....	<i>His sister</i>
CYNTHIA SUMNER.....	<i>His daughter</i>
JANE PALMER	
ELSIE DAVIS	
THERESE, .....	<i>Cynthia's maid</i>

ACT I. A room in Sumner's apartment on Riverside Drive in New York City.

ACT II. A room in Sumner's home at Port Washington, L. I.

ACT III. The Villa Marchese at Mentone.

NOTE:....The little French song that is sung by Cynthia in ACT II is called "Ca fait peur aux oiseaux". It may be purchased from Chas. H. Ditson of New York, or another may be substituted if desired.

## THE RAINBOW

"The Rainbow" was first produced at the Liberty Theatre, New York City in March 4th, 1912 with the following cast:

NEIL SUMNER.....	<i>Henry Miller</i>
EDWARD FELLOWS.....	<i>Charles Hammond</i>
NICHOLAS HOLLINS.....	<i>Robert Stowe Gill</i>
WILLIAM MORTIMER.....	<i>H. Conway Wingfield</i>
JAMES JUDSON.....	<i>Effingham Pinto</i>
JOHN CARPENTER GILMORE.....	<i>Daniel Pennell</i>
BENNETT.....	<i>George C. Pierce</i>
RUTH SUMNER.....	<i>Edith Barker</i>
BETSY SUMNER.....	<i>Laura Hope Crews</i>
CYNTHIA SUMNER.....	<i>Ruth Chatterton</i>
JANE PALMER.....	<i>Hope Latham</i>
ELSIE DAVIS.....	<i>Ethel Martin</i>
THERESE.....	<i>Ethel Lloyd</i>

# THE RAINBOW

## ACT I.

SCENE: *The main room in SUMNER's apartment on Riverside Drive in New York City. It is an apartment that evidences wealth and cultivation on the part of possessor. The main entrance is through a large arch at c., hung with portieres. This opens into a spacious hallway and at back c. of the hall is seen a smaller arch and a sliding panelled door, leading into the cardroom.*

*A door down stage L. leads into the gray room, and a door at R. leads into NEIL's own room. At upper R. and running a little obliquely to the back walls is a large practical double window. This is draped with a pair of rich curtains and valence. The floor is covered by a large Persian rug—leaving a good margin of the floor visible. At R. back, is a settee and at L. back, a large table. At L. facing the window opposite, is a desk and cabinet. The scene is obliqued here also. At R. and L. above doors are handsome bookcases on which are set some beautiful ornaments. Over the bookcases and table and settee at back, are hung oil paintings. The walls are tapestry covered. A smaller rug is placed before the desk at L. with a single chair in front of it. Large carved wood armchairs are R. and L. by the bookcases. A chair is below both doors R. and L. A round table is set R. of c. with*

*chairs at side and at back. A large lamp stands behind table. On the top of the cabinet is set a bronzed statuette of a lion. The desk shows a pair of rich desk lamps lighted at rise, also handsome writing set, and a golden framed miniature is placed at lower L. of desk. The table at back is covered by a long scarf and a tray with syphon, whiskey bottle and several glasses filled with ice—which BENNETT makes up into highballs. On the wall at R. of arch are placed buttons—one of which operates the lights, and the other calls the servants. When the curtains on the window are withdrawn a box of blooming hyacinths is seen outside the window and, opposite, the suggestion of a neighboring house.*

*When the curtain rises the curtains are drawn, shutting out the moonlight. The room is dark except for the lighted lamps on the desk. A dim light is seen in the hall. The cardroom at rear is brightly lighted showing a card table with four players seated around. The hour is about three of a morning early in May, and there are many evidences of a long night of card playing that is just drawing to a close. The men are noisily finishing a rubber and the air is heavy with the smoke from their cigars and cigarettes. JUDSON is seated at back of table in his shirt-sleeves. FELLOWS is L. of table—MORTIMER R. of table and below table with his back to audience is seated NEIL SUMNER. BENNETT is seen at upper L. of the main room concocting highballs. The four players are chatting noisily until the curtain is well up.*

JUDSON. Well, I can't help it, old man. I couldn't tell where the ten of clubs lay.

MORTIMER. Ten of clubs nothing! What the devil was the use of opening up clubs anyhow, when you couldn't control 'em!

FELLOWS. Better own up, Juddy. He's got the goods on you.

JUDSON. (*Dealing the cards*) Goods be damned! If I only had a drink. Where the deuce is Bennett, anyhow? I'm as dry as a temperance speech. (*Sings*)

"Oh, give us a drink, bartender, bartender,  
For we love you as you know,  
And if you will oblige us,  
With another drink or so,  
We want no wine of a foreign vintage——"

MORTIMER. Oh, shut up, Juddy. I am saddest when you sing.

JUDSON. All right then—I'll make it no trumps.

FELLOWS. I'll pass.

JUDSON. (*Rising*) Oh you Bennett—Bennett!

(BENNETT carries a tray with highball glasses upon it into the room)

BENNETT. Coming, sir, coming! (*Serves JUDSON and FELLOWS first, then crosses and serves MORTIMER and SUMNER*)

MORTIMER. Here's Bennett at last!

JUDSON. Bennett, my preserver, my life preserver!

BENNETT. Very sorry, sir. Very sorry.

JUDSON. All right, Bennett. But don't do it again.

BENNETT. (*Coming out*) No, sir, certainly not, sir. (*As he passes into the inner room and places his tray on the table, the outside doorbell rings*.)

BENNETT crosses to table r. c. and lights the lamp, then goes up and shuts the door into the card room and goes out at r. rear. After a pause returns with MRS. PALMER, a modish young woman of thirty-five or so—clever, a bit worn, and with a gift for sarcasm—a woman of no illusions and few scruples. MRS. PALMER comes to chair l. of table. BENNETT crosses up to l. of arch and pulls the cord bringing the curtains together)

BENNETT. I'll speak to Mr. Sumner at once, Mrs. Palmer. He's expecting you, I believe.

MRS. PALMER. Very good—and Bennett——

BENNETT. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. PALMER. Just look after my maid, will you? While she's waiting for me.

BENNETT. Certainly, ma'am, certainly.

MRS. PALMER. Thanks, Bennett. (He goes out. MRS. PALMER crosses to l. and looks at the miniature on the desk. The door into card room is heard to open; the hum of voices is heard and the door closes. Then NEIL enters through curtains at c.)

NEIL. Ah, Jane! How are you. (They shake hands)

MRS. PALMER. And how are you, Neil?

NEIL. I'm able to sit up.

MRS. PALMER. Yes—I see you're sitting up.

NEIL. Well, now what can we do for you? We've some very rare bargains imported at great expense from the——

MRS. PALMER. No, I'm not buying tonight. I've come to get something for nothing.

NEIL. You're in the wrong shop. Now there's a store just around the corner——

MRS. PALMER. No, I'm in the right shop. Look here, Neil, it's clear enough that something out of ordinary has brought me here, isn't it?

NEIL. Why——

MRS. PALMER. Of course it is. I'm sorry to spoil your card party but—

NEIL. Oh, that's all right. I'm dummy just now anyhow. Fire away! (*They sit down*)

MRS. PALMER. I don't know if you remember Dolly Winter!

NEIL. Winter, Winter? Oh, yes, pleasing little blonde person. What became of her?

MRS. PALMER. Well, fact is, Dolly's in a bad fix. That's why I 'phoned you at this hour of the night. She's been prowling the street all night with her trouble. I haven't seen her in weeks but finally she got so desperate she rang me up just as I got home from supper after the theatre. I soon found out you're the only man who can help her, so I 'phoned you at once.

NEIL. I?

MRS. PALMER. Yes, you. Oh, I know it means very little to you but it means a frightful lot to her and—well, it's this—I suppose you knew about Dolly and Nick Hollins—

NEIL. Oh, I may have had a notion—

MRS. PALMER. Well, a few months ago Dolly met a boy from her home town. He was crazy about her, and always had been, he told her, and she seems to think he's about all there is in life—at any rate she married him. He's a broker's clerk, down the street, somewhere—at twenty-five a week.

NEIL. Think of that. Twenty-five a week and she loves him. Wonderful!

MRS. PALMER. So she says and I guess it's true.

NEIL. Well, well, this sounds like sincere devotion.

MRS. PALMER. Doesn't it? Well, there she sat in my dressing room telling me her miserable story and weeping her heart out—I suppose she'd have been a little surprised to know that I rather envied her.

NEIL. Why, Jane?

MRS. PALMER. Well, anyhow, she quit Nick and married this boy and they went to live in some dinky little flat up in Harlem, somewhere so far north that the vegetation is stunted.

NEIL. Yes, I know—you have to take the Albany night boat to get there. Well, I suppose she didn't tell her husband what she had been doing—about Nick, I mean.

MRS. PALMER. No.

NEIL. And now he's found out.

MRS. PALMER. No—that's the point; she's deathly afraid he will.

NEIL. But how?

MRS. PALMER. It's Nick—some how he found out where she went and came to see her day before yesterday. He's got some letters of hers, three of them, she says. She says they'd look pretty bad if her husband were to see them.

NEIL. I see. And Nick is holding them over her head—is that it?

MRS. PALMER. Yes. He said if she didn't come back to him in three days—that's tomorrow—he'd send the letters to her husband.

NEIL. H'm—pretty idea—

MRS. PALMER. Charming.

NEIL. Why will they write letters? D'you know, I think it's quite a mistake to teach women to write at all. (*She laughs*)

MRS. PALMER. Or men either. (*NEIL laughs*) Well, now, you practically keep Nick Hollins going, don't you?

NEIL. Well—

MRS. PALMER. Anyhow, he'd hate like sin to lose the salary you pay him. I know that.

NEIL. Tell me, did she tell Nick how she felt about this young man?

MRS. PALMER. Yes, so she says—but Nick told

her she'd get sick of this boy soon and that she was a fool not to see it. Maybe he's right. But I don't know. It sort of seemed to me that she ought to have a chance to run straight, especially since there's nothing to prevent it except a pup like Hollins.

NEIL. Where is she now?

MRS. PALMER. Dolly? Oh, she didn't seem to think she could tell you about it herself, so I left her at home having hysterics.

NEIL. Poor little girl, poor little girl. (*He rises and rings the bell*)

MRS. PALMER. Yes, it's pretty tough!

NEIL. Just tell her to go home to bed. Tell her that I say it will be all right.

MRS. PALMER. Ah, you'll do it, won't you?

NEIL. Leave it to me. She shall have those letters tomorrow afternoon.

MRS. PALMER. Don't bother about that. Just burn them up yourself.

NEIL. Are you sure you can trust me?

MRS. PALMER. Trust you—you! Why Neil, you dear old boy. What funny noises you do make.

NEIL. Oh, well—(*Enter BENNETT*) Oh, Bennett, telephone to the Turf Club. If Mr. Hollins is there ask him to take a taxi and run over here right away. If he's not there telephone his apartment. Say it's imperative.

BENNETT. Shall I wake him up, sir?

NEIL. Oh, he won't be in bed. He's the original night-watchman.

BENNETT. Very well, sir. (*Goes out*)

MRS. PALMER. Well, I'll be off with the good news. (*She shakes hands with NEIL*) I knew you'd do it.

NEIL. Do it. Good God! I am not quite a

MRS. PALMER. No, you're not and that's a fact. beast.

And you may quote me as saying so to whom it may concern.

NEIL. Thank you, Jane, thank you.

MRS. PALMER. (*Glancing about rather wistfully*) What a jolly place you've got here.

NEIL. Think so?

MRS. PALMER. Yes, very. You know, Neil—

NEIL. Yes?

MRS. PALMER. I don't think I'll say it. Thank you, and good-night.

NEIL. Good-night, Jane, good-night. (*She gives him a lingering hand clasp and goes out. He stands thinking a moment. Door slam is heard and then he draws the curtains aside and enters the card room, just as BENNETT comes back*) Well, Jimmy, what did you do?

JUDSON. (*Rising*) You'll be surprised. They made the odd.

NEIL. Surprised! I certainly am. Why, with all those hearts—! Well, Bennett?

BENNETT. I couldn't get Mr. Hollins, sir, but I left word at the Club and at the apartment.

NEIL. All right.

(*The players come noisily into the room. MORTIMER with score card in hand goes to the table, sits, then begins to add the score. FELLOWS follows MORTIMER to oversee the accounting. As they enter, BENNETT goes into the card room and turns off lights.*)

MORTIMER. (*Slaps JIMMY on shoulder*) My dear Jimmy, you're the worst ever.

FELLOWS. Jimmy, why didn't you finesse your Jack? You could have won the rubber.

JUDSON. You're a great help to me. Besides, the cards lay almost as badly as they could.

MORTIMER. They always do.

FELLOWS. Yes, for Jimmy.

(Enter BENNETT from rear.)

JUDSON. I say, Bennett, 'phone for a taxi, will you?

BENNETT. Certainly, Mr. Judson. (Goes out)

JUDSON. (To MORTIMER, who has the score) Well, Mortimer, what's the awful total?

MORTIMER. There you are. Two-forty-five.

JUDSON. Phew! Two-forty-five. Wow! I'll have to dine at Childs' for a month.

NEIL. Let's see. (Looks at score. To MORTIMER) Mm! You did yourselves rather well, eh? Billy—you and Ned?

MORTIMER. Not so bad.

NEIL. I'll give you my check. (Goes to desk to write a check)

MORTIMER. No hurry.

NEIL. What is that they say—In God we trust—all others must—write checks.

JUDSON. I hate writing checks. They always bob up just when you've forgotten all about 'em. (Takes wallet from pocket)

FELLOWS. Yes, like wild oats.

NEIL. (Writing) Or people you used to like when you were young and didn't know any better.

JUDSON. (Counting out the cash) Well, there's a century. (Pretends to kiss it) Farewell, sweet one—and two fifties; good-bye little dears, and two twenties, au revoir, merry companions—and five ones. Scat, you brutes! (Puts on his overcoat and hat, and takes cane from settee at back, MORTIMER rises also)

FELLOWS. What's my share of the boot?

MORTIMER. (Consulting the score) Three-seventy-five.

FELLOWS. (Scooping up the cash) All right.

I'll take this. You can send me your check for the balance.

MORTIMER First thing in the morning, Ned?  
(*Neil gives him a check*)

JUDSON. (*Attempting a joke*) Well, I've had a pleasant evening; all the same, if I'm found a gory suicide in the morning, you'll know who's to—(*FELLOWS pinches his elbow warningly, and MORTIMER looks daggers at him*. NEIL alone smiles, though rather wanly) Oh, I say—(To NEIL) I am sorry. I didn't mean to say that. Oh, I am a damned old fool. I—

NEIL. (*Goes to JUDSON and puts his arm over his shoulder*) Jimmy, it's all right. I don't mind—really don't think of it again. It's all right.

(BENNETT appears.)

BENNETT. Your taxi, Mr. Judson. (*Exits*)

MORTIMER. Get a wiggle, Jimmy. Can't you see Ned's got something on his chest. If we don't beat it, he'll keep Neil up all night.

NEIL. Oh, you chaps needn't hurry. It isn't so late.

JUDSON. No, it's getting earlier every minute.  
(*Looks at his watch*) Gee! And I've got to be at the office at ten.

NEIL. Oh, well, you'll be snoring at three-thirty.

MORTIMER. Yes, and swearing at eight.

NEIL. Have a night-cap before you go.

MORTIMER. No, thanks. I don't wear 'em.

JUDSON. Not me. I'm sufficiently balmy as it is.

MORTIMER. (*To NEIL*) And, by the way, don't forget, I'm coming for you with the car at noon, and we'll lunch at the track.

NEIL. Who's in the party?

MORTIMER. Oh, Mrs. Palmer.

NEIL. Mr. Palmer, too?

MORTIMER. (*With a grin*) Yes. Thought I'd give the old chap a treat.

NEIL. Good—good.

MORTIMER. And er—Elsie Davis.

NEIL. (*With a whistle of gay dismay*) Phew! Elsie Davis, eh? Well, really old fellow—

MORTIMER. Oh, your reputation will stand it, eh, Jimmy?

JUDSON. Ha, ha! I should say so. He ought to be delighted. Elsie's no end of fun.

NEIL. So she is. Poor little chick. So she is. See you at noon, then. (*MORTIMER starts to go*) And bring along your roll. Tierney tells me King Pepper is just on edge and bound to win his start.

MORTIMER. It listens good to me. Bye-bye.

NEIL. Good-night. Bye-bye, Jimmy.

JUDSON. Couldn't you give a poor old man ten cents for a bed?

NEIL. Get out, you rascal.

MORTIMER. Oh, come along, Jimmy, or I'll make you pay for the taxi. (*Goes out*)

JUDSON. (*In much dismay*) My God! Wait a minute. Here—I say! (*Claps on his hat and escapes from the room on the run. A momentary pause and the outside door is heard to slam*)

NEIL. Ha, ha! Good fellow, Jimmy.

FELLOWS. Yes. He'll do. (*They sit down*)

NEIL. Yes, Jimmy's all right, but a little thoughtless sometimes, eh?

FELLOWS. That was rather clumsy of him.

NEIL. Oh, I don't mind. It's an old story. But sometimes I get to feeling a little sorry for myself. I suppose we all have those moments. I couldn't keep my wife's brother from shooting himself in my house, after losing at cards to me.

FELLOWS. Oh, you don't have to tell me that.

NEIL. I know it. But it does me good. I couldn't get out of playing with him even though I had promised Ruth not to do it. When you've won big money from a man and he demands satisfaction—well, what can you do?

FELLOWS. Nothing but give it to him.

NEIL. And it was one of those times when I simply couldn't lose. It was the very devil, and Ruth—

FELLOWS. She couldn't see any excuse for you.

NEIL. Not an atom. Of course, all the newspaper row aggravated the mess, and the fact that Hanford recovered didn't in the least palliate my offense in her eyes. I had promised her not to play again with her brother and I had done it. That was enough.

FELLOWS. I saw her today.

NEIL. Who?

FELLOWS. Why Ruth of course.

NEIL. Ruth—here?

FELLOWS. Didn't you know it?

NEIL. No.

FELLOWS. Why, I thought of course you knew.

NEIL. Never heard a word of it. What brings her here, I wonder?

FELLOWS. She got in yesterday on the Provence, telephoned me today—wanted to see me about some of her business affairs, and I called at her hotel.

NEIL. Is—is she well?

FELLOWS. Oh, yes, very. But this is what's on my mind. I think I ought to tell her.

NEIL. Tell her?

FELLOWS. I mean about her brother.

NEIL. Oh, for heaven's sake, why did up that old affair?

FELLOWS. I think she ought to know.

NEIL. After ten years? What on earth's the use?

FELLOWS. Oh, it was easy enough to keep her in the dark as long as she stayed in France and you kept on paying the interest on the money her brother stole from her estate but if she stays here long she's sure to find out about it somehow.

NEIL. Nonsense. Who's going to tell her? Nobody knows.

FELLOWS. And then it's all so confoundedly unfair to you. Here she goes on seeing in her rascally brother merely an unfortunate well-meaning victim of chance and you—while all the time he robbed her of over \$200,000 and you foot the bill. I'm damned sorry you ever interfered. You ought to have let him take his medicine.

NEIL. Oh, dry up, Ned, dry—

FELLOWS. But it's not fair—it's not just—it's not—

NEIL. Oh stop it, Ned, stop it. What good will it do to tell Ruth that her brother is a crook and a swindler as well as a gambler. If she hadn't got a legal separation with the custody of the little girl, if there were still any chance for me, I mean, it might be different, but as it is, come—come, old man, don't go and start anything after all those years.

FELLOWS. Well, of course, I can't if you won't let me, but as your lawyer and hers, I think it's mighty bad business and as your friend—

NEIL. Oh, I'll take all the responsibility. So let it go at that. And tell me, now, did you—did you see Cynthia?

FELLOWS. Oh, yes, I saw her. You—you'd scarcely know her now.

NEIL. No—no—I suppose I shouldn't.

FELLOWS. She's almost a woman now, you know,

NEIL. Almost a woman—yes, of course, she must be. (*Rises*) Just a second please. (*Goes*

*into his room, speaks from there)* I've got something here I want to show you. (*Returns with a little photograph in an ivory frame*) Here's a portrait of the child, taken when she was six years old. (*Gives it to FELLOWS*) Tell me, is she utterly changed—or is there some—some likeness left?

FELLOWS. (*Looking at the portrait*) Oh, the resemblance is there.

NEIL. (*Pleased*) Is it?

FELLOWS. Oh, yes, but of course, there are changes. Do you know your daughter's grown into an unusually pretty girl?

NEIL. Has she now?

FELLOWS. Very slender, very dainty, very rose-like.

NEIL. Is she, now? (*Takes photograph and slips it back into his pocket*)

FELLOWS. But of course, you'll soon see for yourself.

NEIL. I'm afraid not.

FELLOWS. Why not?

NEIL. I'm afraid.

FELLOWS. Afraid.

NEIL. Yes—ah, well, it's a queer world. I don't see how I could have acted differently. All the same, it's put a devilish big crimp in my life, first and last; I was really fond of her—and of the little girl—and—well, I haven't done myself much good and I—I've been pretty lonely.

FELLOWS. She was pretty hard on you, old man, and that's a fact.

NEIL. Oh, well, I suppose it's one of those things that a woman can't understand.

FELLOWS. There are such things.

NEIL. (*With a little smile*) Yes, a few. Ned, it's a devil of a life that most of us are leading.

FELLOWS. It is, for a fact.

NEIL. Yesterday, I met old Underwood, out for

his afternoon constitutional—just as I have met him for years. Always as neat as a pin, clothes perfection, a fresh gardenia in his buttonhole, manicured, tailored, booted and barbered, year by year getting a little plumper, a little balder, a little more sallow, a little more wheezy, a little more selfish year after year. Some morning his valet will call him for his bath at nine o'clock as usual—and—well—he won't wake up. Hm!—I wonder if there isn't anything more in life than that.

FELLOWS. My dear Neil, surely you don't compare yourself with—

NEIL. With old Underwood—sallow old Underwood? Yes, I do—in a way. Year after year—on we go with our cards and our races and our Jane Palmers and our Elsie Davises, our theatres, our opera, our restaurants, and all our hectic friyol and froth, and what do we get—little more wheezy, a little more sallow, a little more selfish, year after year, and some morning our valets—well, I don't quite see myself ending like that—

FELLOWS. Gad! I should hope not.

NEIL. Somehow, I've a wish that my last nap shall be taken back on the farm—up in the Berkshires somewhere—somewhere near the soil from which my people sprang.

FELLOWS. Well—it would be better than the dismal finish you've sketched out for old Underwood.

NEIL. Yes, it would—somewhat—There'd be some dogs to miss me, anyhow.

(*Bell rings.*)

FELLOWS. (*As they both rise*) Well, I must be off. (*Goes up to the settee for his coat and hat*)

NEIL. Let me get you a taxi.

FELLOWS. Nothing of the sort. It's only half

a dozen blocks. I'll sleep better for the walk.

(Enter HOLLINS. *He is a man of the world, clever, almost brilliant, unscrupulous, unlucky, dissatisfied, deservedly disappointed and unreasonably envious of people more happy than himself.*)

HOLLINS. Hello, Fellows.

NEIL and FELLOWS. Hello, Nick.

HOLLINS. How're you, Neil.

FELLOWS. Well, you make your calls late.

NEIL. Yes, Nick opens the town up every morning before he goes to bed.

FELLOWS. Well, bye-bye you chaps.

NEIL and HOLLINS. Good-night, etc.

(Exit FELLOWS. *The door slams lightly after him.*)

NEIL. Sit down, Nick.

HOLLINS. (*Sitting*) Sure I will, if I can have a drink.

NEIL. As many as you like.

HOLLINS. Oh, no, I can't hold that many. I've tried. But what the devil's up?

NEIL. (*Comes down to table—gives NICK the drink*) Better take your drink now. (*NICK about to drink—hesitates*) You may not want it later. (*HOLLINS looks puzzled, then gulps down the whiskey*)

HOLLINS. Well, I've got that anyhow. Blaze away.

NEIL. (*Sits*) Nick, you have osme letters. I want them.

HOLLINS. Letters?

NEIL. From Dolly Winter.

HOLLINS. Well, upon my soul!

NEIL. You are to bring them to me at eleven

a'clock tomorrow morning.

HOLLINS. See here, Neil, have you lost your mind?

NEIL. I think not.

HOLLINS. Damned if I ever heard the like.

NEIL. Nick, bluffs don't go. I know exactly what you've done, and it's got to stop.

HOLLINS. Has that little hussy been running to you? If she has I'll——

NEIL. Now, don't be ridiculous. Whatever you were going to say, you won't do it.

HOLLINS. All right, then. You know so much. I suppose I may ask you what you know.

NEIL. Certainly. You threatened to go to her husband with certain information.

HOLLINS. Oh, I did, did I? And you're going to take the word of this little fly-by-night against mine?

NEIL. Yes, if you deny it. You see, Nick, I happen to know you pretty well.

HOLLINS. I see. I'm a devil, and you, in your new character of saint, are going to administer justice. Is that it?

NEIL. If you like.

HOLLINS. Well, of course, the girl's lied to you.

NEIL. Can you suggest a motive? (*A pause*) All she asks it to be let alone.

HOLLINS. Well, what are you going to do about it?

NEIL. You admit the letters?

HOLLINS. I daresay I've got some letters. Haven't you?

NEIL. At eleven o'clock tomorrow morning, then.

HOLLINS. Look here, Neil, of course, this is all too absurd for words. But let me tell you just the same, that I resent your interference. Who the devil are you, I should like to know, to pass judg-

ment on me? I'd have you know that it comes with mighty bad grace from you—you—in a holier-than-thou attitude. Pah! If you could only see yourself. (*Rising and facing NEIL*) I tell you, it's no affair of yours.

NEIL. (*Rising*) And I tell you I make it my affair. (*A pause. The two men confront each other*) See here, Nick, do you want to quarrel with me?

HOLLINS. (*His eyes dropping from the encounter*) Why, of course not. Only this absurd affair—

NEIL. I thought not. It wouldn't pay you, would it? Well, then, those letters at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning. And Dolly and her George are never to hear from you in any way whatever. I mean that in its broadest sense. No evasions. If she comes to grief through you I shall be forced to get a new racing manager, and there will be no more of those little advances with which you never seem to catch up. Do I make myself clear?

HOLLINS. (*Taking his hat from table*) Exceptionally. But I must say—well, what's the use, you know. He'll find her out just the same—

NEIL. Well, one thing's sure—we won't help him. Have another drink.

HOLLINS. No, thanks.

NEIL. Then, good-night. The letters at eleven, and don't send them. Bring them.

HOLLINS. Oh, they'll be here. And much good may they do her. And it is with deep emotion that I turn my back upon the charming scene where virtue has triumphed and vice been overwhelmed.

NEIL. (*With irony*) Be a man, Nick. Don't give way.

HOLLINS. Ha! (*With a sneer he goes out. A pause and door slam is heard*)

(NEIL takes the child's photograph from his pocket and looks at it. Enter BENNETT at rear, and begins to set the room to rights.)

NEIL. Oh, never mind all that till morning, Bennett. Go to bed. Sorry to have kept you up so late.

BENNETT. Oh, that's all right, sir. You're not home often of an evening nowadays, sir.

NEIL. No, that's true. (Goes to the door of his room) Well, don't call me until eleven.

BENNETT. No, sir, at eleven, sir.

NEIL. And, before you go, suppose you open a window. This place needs a little sweetening up. Good-night. (He goes into his room)

BENNETT. Good-night, sir. (He goes to the window, draws the curtain, opens the window. The sweet night air steals in gently lifting the side-curtains. The butler then takes the glasses and ash-tray from the table, goes to the hall, turns off the hall-light and disappears. The curtain falls on the room lighted only by the moonlight from the window. When the curtain rises one minute later, it shows the same room flooded with morning sunshine. A little r. of c. is a small table set for breakfast for one. BENNETT hovers about the table busy with the last touches. A moment later HOLLINS comes in from the hall)

HOLLINS. Well, Bennett, you old rascal, how do you find yourself?

BENNETT. I'm as well as could be expected, Mr. Hollins, and I hope you're well, sir.

HOLLINS. (Sitting by the table) Oh, yes, yes. I'm well. There's nothing in the other thing. I've tried it. We're breakfasting rather late today, what?

BENNETT. (Resenting this remark a bit) That's all accordin' as you look at it, sir.

HOLLINS. Haven't you heard that it's the early bird that catches the worm?

BENNETT. I have, sir, many's the time.

HOLLINS. Yes—so have I, but the proverb never impressed me much. You see, Bennett, I don't happen to have a taste for worms. No more, I take it, has your master. Well, it's almost eleven, so suppose you go and route him out.

BENNETT. I hardly like to do that, sir. But perhaps he's stirring already. It sometimes happens that he's up when I go in to call him. (*Listens at door*) Yes, sir, I think he's up already.

HOLLINS. (*Rising and taking a long sealed envelope from his pocket*) Oh, is he? Well, if you don't mind, Bennett—hand him this. (*BENNETT receives envelope then goes to door. BENNETT knocks on his master's door just as the door-bell is heard to ring*)

NEIL. (*Off stage*) Come in, Bennett, come in.

(BENNETT enters the bed room as BETSY SUMNER enters at c. BETSY SUMNER'S sister, is some ten years younger than he. She is rather a brisk, humorous person, kindly, but shrewd, with few illusions. Her heart is big, but it doesn't prevent her keen brain from seeing the faults of those she loves. She is fond of her brother, but tempers her fondness with strong disapproval of much that he does. She dislikes HOLLINS exceedingly, and is at little pains to conceal it.)

HOLLINS. Ah, good morning, Miss Sumner.

BETSY. (*Coldly*) Good morning, Mr. Hollins.

HOLLINS. I'll warrant you didn't hope to find me here.

BETSY. (*Sitting at the table*) Hope is hardly the word.

HOLLINS. Well, you're no more surprised than I. One doesn't often see Miss Sumner at her brother's house.

BETSY. (*Acidly*) Oh, doesn't *one*?

HOLLINS. Not *this one*. And it's rather a pity, too. I think you'd like him if you knew him better.

BETSY. So?

HOLLINS. (*Mockingly*) Yes. I assure you, he's really not at all a bad sort.

BETSY. Mr. Hollins, I don't know that your opinion on that point seems to me so very valuable.

HOLLINS. Well, it ought to be. I know him very well.

BETSY. While he doesn't know you *at all* well.

HOLLINS. Oh, but he *does*.

BETSY. He can't—or he wouldn't have you about so much.

HOLLINS. Mm! You *are* in a nasty mood today.

BETSY. Not at all. I'm feeling particularly cheerful. At least I *was* until—

HOLLINS. Until you saw me, eh?

BETSY. I didn't say it. But I wouldn't think of contradicting you.

HOLLINS. No. You wouldn't think of it. You'd just do it. Well, you're just like all the other reformers.

BETSY. I'm no reformer.

HOLLINS. No?

BETSY. I never reformed anybody in my life.

HOLLINS. No. Reformers never do—that's why I call you *one*.

BETSY. (*Rising*) If I were I should begin with you.

HOLLINS. With me?

BETSY. Yes. I'm an ambitious woman, and you—you're about the hardest case I know.

HOLLINS. I told you you didn't know your own brother very well.

BETSY. (*Pointedly*) I should know him a great deal better if there weren't a lot of good-for-nothings always hanging about whenever I try to see him.

HOLLINS. (*Seeing the point, gives himself a burlesque blow on the chin as though he had been hit hard, then reaches for his watch*) Whereupon, our astute young hero, consulting his chronometer, suddenly exclaimed: "By Jove, I've an appointment. Clean forgot all about it. Fair lady, will you pardon me if I run away?"

BETSY. To which the lady replied sweetly: "With the greatest of pleasure."

HOLLINS. (*Angry, but bowing elaborately*) In that case good-morning.

BETSY. (*Tartly*) In that case, good-bye. (*Hollins goes out with a sardonic smile. Betsy sits with exclamation of disgust*) Insect!

(BENNETT comes out of his master's room.)

BENNETT. Good morning, Miss Betsy.

BETSY. Good morning, Bennett.

BENNETT. Mr. Neil will be out directly, Miss Betsy.

BETSY. All right.

BENNETT. Has Mr. Hollins gone?

BETSY. He has, Bennett. Do you regret it?

BENNETT. Not the least in the world, ma'am.

BETSY. Nor I. I don't care if he never comes back.

BENNETT. But he will, ma'am.

BETSY. I suppose so.

BENNETT. He always does.

BETSY. Drat him!

BENNETT. I'm of the same opinion, ma'am.

(Enter NEIL at r. He is perfectly dressed in a highly becoming morning suit, is evidently just bathed and shaved and looks as fresh and debonair as you please.)

NEIL. (Goes to BETSY and kisses her hand)  
My dear Betsy. I'm delighted.

BETSY. Thank you, Neil.

NEIL. Delighted, charmed and astounded! But where's Hollins? I thought Bennett said—

BETSY. He's gone.

NEIL. Gone!

BETSY. Yes, I built a bonfire under him.

NEIL. Built a bonfire under him. Why, how inhospitable of you!

BETSY. I all but ejected the brute.

NEIL. Ejected—well, well, you don't come here very often. When you do, you may do as you like. Now, how's that?

BETSY. That's as it should be.

NEIL. Mayn't I offer you some breakfast?

BETSY. Breakfast! It's almost time for lunch.

SUMNER. (Sitting) You do keep barbarous hours, don't you?

BETSY. I! No, I live like a human being—not like an owl. (She sits opposite him)

NEIL. (Attacking the grape-fruit) The owl is the bird of wisdom. But be that as it may—and probably is—you won't mind if I—

BETSY. Certainly not. You eat and I'll talk. In that way each of us will be enjoying his favorite sport.

NEIL. Well, my dear sis, I don't suppose you came here just for the sake of observing me at my breakfast pranks?

BETSY. I did not.

NEIL. Then to what do I owe this unusual pleasure?

BETSY. I came to bring you some news.

NEIL. I know—about Ruth's return?

BETSY. You've heard?

NEIL. I heard last night. I suppose you've known for some time. You might have told me.

BETSY. Yes—but there didn't seem to be any use in stirring things up.

NEIL. Yes, that's true. Of course you've seen her.

BETSY. Yes—I've just left her.

NEIL. How is she—well?

BETSY. Oh, yes.

NEIL. And—happy?

BETSY. Well, *are you?*

NEIL. My dear Betsy, there you open a large question. What *is* happiness. If by happiness you mean—

BETSY. Heavens! I've pressed a button somewhere, and it's going to make a speech.

NEIL. There you see! You complain that I'm frivolous and when I try to be serious—

BETSY. You're more frivolous than ever.

NEIL. I know what's the matter with you.

BETSY. Oh, do you?

NEIL. Nothing annoys a woman so much as to have someone else get ahead of her with a piece of news.

BETSY. Well, I can at least tell you how she looks. She's getting a little gray.

NEIL. Is she? Well, she was always candid—I'll say that for her.

BETSY. Will nothing make you serious?

NEIL. My dearest sis, would you like me better that way?

BETSY. Honestly, I don't know.

NEIL. Because I don't believe you would. And anyhow, I can't do it. Life's a sort of joke anyway and it's on us. And the devil fly away with a man

who can't laugh at his own expense. Just consider the case we're all in. We've got nothing to say about coming into this world, and less about leaving it. We're put here without as much as a "by your leave", and when we go we're not even asked if we're ready, and while we're suffered to stay someone pulls a string and we dance, some of us gracefully, some of us with the least grace in the world. (BENNETT enters with tray, containing a small silver tray with coffee pot and milk pitcher and a covered dish with omelette) But dance we all must and do. Marionettes. That's what we are, my dear sis, just marionettes—and, to a philosophic eye, vastly comic. (He has finished his grape-fruit) Bennett, what have you for this marionette to eat? Dancing makes him hungry.

BENNETT. Omelette a la Creole, Mr. Neil. (He serves it)

NEIL. Good. Mayn't I offer you a cup of coffee?

BETSY. No, thank you. You might make another speech.

NEIL. Suppose I did?

BETSY. Well—coffee always keeps me awake.

NEIL. Well, Bennett we'll excuse you.

BENNETT. Yes sir. (Goes out with tray)

NEIL. Well, then if you don't like my nonsense, suppose you give us some of your sense. (He attacks his omelette)

BETSY. Very well. Now it's my turn to make a speech.

NEIL. Cries of "Hear, Hear!"

BETSY. Oh! It's a very short one.

NEIL. Thunders of applause!

BETSY. It's this. You are about to receive a visit.

NEIL. You talk like a fortune teller. Is it a dark man coming with a bundle?

BETSY. No, it's not a man.

NEIL. (*Suddenly serious*) You don't mean Ruth?

BETSY. No. I mean Cynthia.

NEIL. What?

BETSY. Yes.

NEIL. God bless my soul!

BETSY. I hope he will.

NEIL. She's coming to see me?

BETSY. Yes.

NEIL. Here?

BETSY. Right here.

NEIL. (*Rising and abandoning his breakfast*)  
God bless my soul.

BETSY. She's going to stay some time.

NEIL. Going to stay?

BETSY. If you don't mind!

NEIL. Mind! Mind! Why—why—it's wonderful—and—and it's quite too kind of Ruth to think of it. (*Faces about in excitement*)

BETSY. I don't think it was *Ruth's* idea.

NEIL. Whose then? Yours?

BETSY. No. Cynthia's.

NEIL. Cynthia! God bless the child.

BETSY. Oh, do sit down.

NEIL. Certainly. (*He sits*)

BETSY. You see, Neil, your daughter, it appears, has a mind of her own.

NEIL. Of course she has. She's my daughter.

BETSY. Well, one morning over in France, she woke up to the fact that she had mislaid her father. She'd noticed other girls' fathers, and she got the queer idea that having fathers was rather nice. Then she began to wonder where hers was and why she never saw him. So she spoke to her mother about it.

NEIL. Rather awkward for Ruth, eh!

BETSY. It was. But the child wouldn't be put

off. Nothing would do but she must see you with her own eyes.

NEIL. God bless her!

BETSY. Well the fact is, that she made such a fuss about it there was no resisting her. She would have it, and there was no end of it. "Of course", she said to her mother, "if I don't like him I don't have to stay——"

NEIL. Eh?

BETSY. "But I've got to see him once anyhow. I've got to see him. He's the only daddy I'm ever going to have—and I want him."

NEIL. (*Much affected*) Bless the child! Bless her.

BETSY. And so, you see, she's *here*.

NEIL. Oh, Betsy, supposing she shouldn't like me—supposing my girl shouldn't like me.

BETSY. Well, in that case, as she herself said, she needn't stay.

NEIL. (*Sobered*) No, that's true. I couldn't make her stay, could I?

BETSY. And, on the other hand, suppose *you* shouldn't like *her*.

NEIL. (*Rises*) Like her! Like her! Why, Betsy, she's mine! My own.

BETSY. Yes. So's my hair—but I don't like it.

NEIL. Oh! My dear, sis, will nothing make you serious?

BETSY. Oh, so I'm the frivolous one now, eh? Well, let me tell you that nothing is further from my mind than frivolity. Do you realize that this is a very grave matter?

NEIL. What do you mean?

BETSY. What are you going to do with her?

NEIL. Do? Why, I'm going to get her the moon, if she wants it.

BETSY. Poor man! He doesn't realize what it means to have a daughter.

NEIL. Well, he's a little out of practice, but he's willing to learn. Tell him.

BETSY. My dear Neil, I'm your sister, and I'm fond of you, but, I'm not blind to your faults. You're not exactly the man I should choose to have the ordering of a young girl's life. And I tell you frankly that this is an experiment of which I do not wholly approve.

NEIL. Betsy!

BETSY. If I could have had my way, the child should have remained where she was—at any rate for a few more years. But, as I say, this child has a will of her own. She would see you. There was no such thing as keeping her away. So here she is. Yet it's a very dubious proceeding, and the outcome for good or evil rests entirely with you.

NEIL. I don't think I quite understand you.

BETSY. Neil, the world is full of harpies, vultures, full of loathesome birds of prey. Many of them masquerade in brilliant plumage but beneath all their fine feathers they are loathsome still. Some of these sinister creatures you have long called your friends.

NEIL. (*In protest*) My dear Betsy!

BETSY. In the shadow of their wings there lurks a deadly blight, lying in wait for youth, lying in wait for innocence. Neil, take care! take care.

NEIL. Upon my word, you're positively tragic about it.

BETSY. No—I'm only warning you.

NEIL. Warning me? Of what?

BETSY. (*Rising*) Why, the first person I see when I come into this house this morning, is Nick Hollins—(*NEIL turns away disgustedly*) Hollins, with a trail of broken homes and ruined happiness behind him. And last night, or the night before, I daresay it was Billy Mortimer, who lives by cards, or Jane Palmer with one disreputable divorce and a

vulgar marriage to a senile millionaire to her discredit, or Elsie Davis and her newspaper infamies or Clarence Williams and his international stage-door escapades, or—

NEIL. My dear sis, you're pretty hard on me, aren't you? All my friends aren't like that, you know. They aren't my real friends at all.

BETSY. Aren't they? Then all I've got to say is, it's pretty hard to tell them apart. But I'll say no more—

NEIL. Thank the Lord—

BETSY. —Only, take care.

NEIL. Take care! Of course I will. But here we are—wasting time chattering, and the child may be—by the way, when is she coming?

BETSY. (*Looking at her watch*) She ought to be here now.

NEIL. (*Rings bell*) Now, don't worry, sis. It's going to be all right. We'll get away from all this. We'll go down to the Port, you and the little girl, and I, just as soon as I can get the house opened. Shall we?

BETSY. I think perhaps it would be best.

NEIL. Good. We'll go down to the Port and hear the birds sing and see the grass grow. That'll be fine, eh? God bless my soul, but it's going to be a splendid summer. (*BENNETT enters with tray to remove breakfast things*) Bennett, clear away these breakfast things, and tell Farley to get the gray room ready. (*BETSY exits into room L. as one who makes inspection, leaving door open*) We're expecting a visitor.

BEENNITT. (*At table, placing dishes on tray*) A visitor?

NEIL. Yes, Bennett, my daughter.

BENNETT. (*Pleased*) Lord! Mr. Neil!

NEIL. Yes—yes—don't stand there staring. Look

alive, man, look alive. (*BETSY re-enters, leaving door open*) She's due any minute.

BENNETT. I'll tell Farley, sir.

NEIL. (*To his sister*) Yes, we'll clear out of this. We'll just quit all this crowd and get out to the good old Port where everything is sweet and lovely like—like Cynthia. It's going to be all right. You'll see. You'll see. And Bennett see that the room is aired out well—and send out for some fresh flowers.

BENNETT. Yes, Mr. Neil, I'll attend to it. (*Exit with tray and dishes as soon as possible—leaving table cleared of everything*)

NEIL. If I'd known she was coming I'd have had the room done over for her. You might have given me time enough for that.

BETSY. Since we're going to the Port it doesn't matter much. How soon can you get the house opened up?

NEIL. Oh, two or three days. I'll go and telephone to Hanson at once. And to Hilliard, too. We'll have the Roamer put into commission. I haven't used her in two years. But this is the time to really spread ourselves, eh?

BETSY. She's been brought up very simply. You mustn't spoil her.

NEIL. Spoil her. I'll give her my head.

BETSY. It isn't your head she wants. It's your heart.

NEIL. Ah! If that were all. (*He goes into his room at R.*)

BETSY. (*Crossing to L.*) I suppose that room hasn't been aired in a month. (*Exits L. leaving door open. Enter CYNTHIA. She is a graceful, slender pretty girl of 17 or 18, with a rippling, musical voice, and a trick of using French words and phrases that betrays her education. She stands*

at c. looking eagerly about the room as BETSY enters) Ah, Cynthia!

CYNTHIA. (*Looking about in disappointment*) Oh, Auntie, isn't he at home?

BETSY. Of course he is. He'll be here in a moment.

(BENNETT enters followed by THERESE, the French maid who speaks no English. She carries a handbag and a hat box.)

CYNTHIA. Have—have you told him?

BETSY. Oh, yes. I've told him.

CYNTHIA. Does he—does he want me?

BETSY. You'll see.

CYNTHIA. Oh, Auntie, dear, don't say he doesn't want me?

BETSY. (*To the maid*) Therese, take Miss Cynthia's things into that room. (*THERESE merely stares*)

CYNTHIA. (*To THERESE*) Voici ma chambre, Therese. Mettez y les choses.

THERESE. Oui, mademoiselle. (*Goes into the room at L. closing door*)

CYNTHIA. She doesn't understand much English, you know.

BETSY. Well, Bennett, what is it?

BENNETT. (*Starting out of his trance*) Oh, nothing, Ma'am. (*Hardly able to take his smiling eyes off the girl*) I just—well—I just—(*Goes out mumbling an excuse*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, Aunty, which is his room?

BETSY. (*Pointing r.*) There.

CYNTHIA. (*In rapture*) Oh!

BETSY. Yes, that's the sacred spot.

CYNTHIA. (*Looking about her*) And here's where he lives—my daddy—Oh, I love this room.

I do love it. (*Enter NEIL at r. He stops short, staring at CYNTHIA. She, too stands stock still, gazing at him. BETSY steps forward ceremoniously after a moment*)

BETSY. Miss Sumner, allow me the honor of presenting your father, Mr. Sumner. (*Father and daughter approach each other slowly, smiling but each a trifle shy. She gives him her hand. He takes it in both of his. She smiles up at him for a moment and then slips gently into his arms murmuring softly "Oh, daddy! daddy!" BETSY looks at them a moment, and then goes into the room at l.*)

NEIL. (*As CYNTHIA raises her head from his breast; still holding both her hands*) My little Cynthia! Is it really possible?

CYNTHIA. (*Shyly*) I—I've grown—haven't I?

NEIL. Grown! Why—I—I shouldn't have known you. Think of that. I might have passed you on the street and I shouldn't have known you.

CYNTHIA. Ah, but I'd have known you.

NEIL. Why, child, how could you? You were hardly more than a baby when—when you—

CYNTHIA. Yes, but mother has a picture of you.

NEIL. Oh, has she?

CYNTHIA. Oh yes.

NEIL. Ah, it must be an old one.

CYNTHIA. But it looks like you, daddy. You haven't changed so very much.

NEIL. Haven't I? Now I thought I had.

CYNTHIA. Oh, no. You look a lot like the picture.

NEIL. Think of that.

CYNTHIA. I should have known you anywhere. Only—only I didn't know you were so handsome.

NEIL. (*Laughing it off, but clearly delighted*) Now—now—see here—you mustn't talk like that.

CYNTHIA. Oh, but I didn't. Nobody ever told me.

NEIL. Really, if you talk like that, you know you'll turn my head. I'm not used to it.

CYNTHIA. Oh, please turn around, daddy dear.

NEIL. (*Turning around*) Turn around?

CYNTHIA. Yes. I want to see your back.

NEIL. Good Lord!

CYNTHIA. Oh, what a dear back——

NEIL. Oh, now you be quiet!

CYNTHIA. Just the kind of a back I wanted my daddy to have.

NEIL. Why, you absurd little angel. (*Catches her in his arms*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, it's just too splendid! It—it can't be true. (*He holds her hands as she leans back forming a pretty picture*) Oh, daddy dear, if you're only half as nice as you look——

NEIL. Ah, I'm afraid I'm not. (*Sees that this sounds conceited and laughs*) Oh, I don't mean that, of course.

CYNTHIA. Ha, ha, ha! That did sound funny, didn't it?

NEIL. What I meant was that I—well—I'm not much used to being a father and—well you must give me time. But I'm going to do the best I can, the very best I can.

CYNTHIA. (*Stepping back*) Oh, I do love you when you smile.

NEIL. (*Smiling broadly*) Do you?

CYNTHIA. You've got the sweetest smile.

NEIL. Really!

CYNTHIA. Didn't anybody ever tell you?

NEIL. No, I don't think it's been called to my attention—at least not recently.

CYNTHIA. Oh, please smile all the time, when I'm with you, daddy dear.

NEIL. I'm afraid it would get monotonous. Besides, I have a splendid frown.

CYNTHIA. Oh! (*Dubious*)

NEIL. Oh, yes, you should see me when I frown. It's very awe-inspiring.

CYNTHIA. I'm sure I should be terribly frightened. Please don't ever frown at me.

NEIL. All right, I won't if you promise never to leave me.

CYNTHIA. Ah, Mais c'est un brave homme, mon papa! Je t'aime! Je t'aime. Je t'aime! (*She gives him her hands again*) But I forgot. Perhaps you don't understand much French.

NEIL. Only a little, my dear.

CYNTHIA. Then I shall teach you, shall I?

NEIL. Yes, indeed, that will be fine.

CYNTHIA. And the very first thing I'll teach you all the pet names I know and you shall call me by them. Will you?

NEIL. Oui, ma petite, avec le plus grand plaisir du monde.

CYNTHIA. Oh, you fraud. You do know French!

NEIL. Not much, my dear, and I'm afraid my accent is not quite—

CYNTHIA. Well, perhaps it's not exactly Parisian, but—

NEIL. Whenever I find a man who can understand *my* French, I'm always suspicious of *his* French.

CYNTHIA. Dearest daddy, I wouldn't care if you were deaf and dumb.

NEIL. No! I daresay there are a lot of people who would prefer me that way.

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy, how can you say so! I think you've got the sweetest voice.

NEIL. Do you, now?

CYNTHIA. Indeed I do. Didn't anybody ever tell you?

SUMNER. Not a soul.

CYNTHIA. Honestly?

NEIL. Honest and true—black and blue! Now that I come to think of it—it seems I've been surrounded by a singularly unobservant set of people.

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy, now you are making fun of me. Ce n'est pas gallant, mon papa.

NEIL. (*Goes quickly to her—puts his arms around her*) Making fun of you! Not unless one makes fun of one's dearest and best.

CYNTHIA. And—and you're sure you want me?

NEIL. Want you!

CYNTHIA. You are sure I won't be—in the way?

NEIL. My dear, I've always wanted you—always—but never so much as now.

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy! daddy! (*She burries her face on his breast. Enter BETSY at L.*)

BETSY. Why, Neil, this is a nice way to treat your daughter.

NEIL. Eh?

BETSY. Why, you haven't even asked her to take off her hat.

NEIL. Hat? Is she wearing one? (*BETSY laughs*) To be sure. My dear—won't you take off your hat?

CYNTHIA. (*Taking it off*) Thank you.

NEIL. (*Taking it from her*) It's a beautiful hat, isn't it? It isn't a hat, it's a halo. All these—er—what-d'you-call-'em, and things. (*Indicating the trimmings*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, that's nothing. Just wait till you see my others.

(*Enter BENNETT.*)

BENNETT. Mr. Hollins is on the 'phone.

NEIL. (*With half a glance at BETSY*) Er, did you say—*Collins!*

BENNETT. No, sir, Hollins, sir!

NEIL. Oh! All right! Just a moment. (*BENNETT exits, somewhat confused.* NEIL is a bit jarred as BETSY gives him a significant look) You'll excuse me, Cynthia? Don't go away now.

CYNTHIA. Go away! Why, of course, I won't. NEIL. You see—I'm afraid to let you out of my sight. (*He goes out*)

CYNTHIA. (*Turning to BETSY*) Who's Mr. Hollins, Auntie?

BETSY. Oh, he's—er—just a man.

CYNTHIA. Auntie. Of course he is. (*Laughing*) But is he one of father's friends?

BETSY. Why, he's er—one of his acquaintances.

CYNTHIA. Is he nice? But of course he *must* be if father has anything to do with him, mustn't he?

BETSY. (*Trying to get out of the hole*) Er—hadn't you better go and look at your room?

CYNTHIA. Oh, no. I promised father I wouldn't go away till he came back from talking to Mr. Hollins. (*Gives hat to BETSY*) Oh, Auntie, won't it be splendid to know all father's friends so that even when I'm not with him I'll know what he's about and—and who he's with and—oh, everything.

BETSY. (*Embarrassed*) Why, dear—I suppose so.

(NEIL comes in again.)

CYNTHIA. (*Crossing to NEIL*) Oh, daddy do tell me about Mr. Hollins. You see, I'm going to

know all about all your friends and we might just as well begin now. Is he nice?

BETSY. (*Significantly*) Yes, Neil tell us all about Nick Hollins.

NEIL. Oh—Oh—there's plenty of time for all that. I've got a lot of things to ask about you first. (*Enter BENNETT*) Well, Bennett.

BENNETT. Mr. Mortimer is down stairs waiting for you, sir.

NEIL. Mortimer? (*Has clearly forgotten all about his date to go to the track*)

BENNETT. Yes, sir.

BETSY. (*Looking at NEIL*) Huh! (*She turns in disgust and goes off L., leaving door open*)

NEIL. (*Remembering*) Oh, yes, I remember. Just tell him that I shan't be able to go after all. Present my apologies, and say I can't go. Say I'm sorry.

BENNETT. Yes, Mr. Neil.

NEIL. And Bennett, telephone for the car, please—not the limousine—it's too fine a day—for the roadster, please.

BENNETT. Yes, Mr. Neil. (*He goes out*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, now I'm keeping you from something.

NEIL. My dear, not at all!

CYNTHIA. Oh, I mustn't begin this way or I shall be a nuisance and first thing I know you'll be sending me back to mother.

NEIL. Nonsense! Nonsense! It's nothing of the least importance. Come now, suppose we take a look at your room—shall we?

CYNTHIA. Yes, indeed.

NEIL. You know if I had know you were coming, I'd have had it all done over for you.

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy. It's under your roof, isn't it?

NEIL. Of course.

CYNTHIA. Alors, ca me suffit. (*They both go out L.*)

(Presently, laughter and gay chatter are heard in the hall and in a moment a merry group enters, attended by BENNETT. They are JANE PALMER, ELSIE DAVIS and MORTIMER. The women are expensively but loudly dressed and, like MORTIMER, who carries a pair of field-glasses in a leather case slung over his shoulder, are attired for an afternoon at the race-track. They are discussing NEIL'S attempt to get rid of them, all speaking together as they come in. It is clear that these are among the birds of prey alluded to by BETSY. Presently MORTIMER'S voice rises from the confused babble.)

MORTIMER. What do you know about that. I distinctly told him I'd be here at twelve with the car. Eh? Well! Where is he, Bennett?

BENNETT. He was here a moment ago, sir. Perhaps he's in his room. I'll see. (*Knocks on the door to NEIL's bedroom. No answer. He looks in*) Not there, sir. He must be in the gray room. (*Crossing to L.*)

ELsie. He must think we're easy to be chucked like that.

MRS. PALMER. Can't come that over you, eh, Elsie?

ELsie. Not on your marriage certificate.

BENNETT. (*Knocks at L.*) Mr. Neil! Mr. Neil! (*The door opens and NEIL comes out. BENNETT goes out*)

NEIL. (*Evidently displeased at seeing the group*) Well! (*Carefully shuts the door behind him*)

MORTIMER. See here, Neil, you can't turn us

down like this, you know. Everything's all arranged, lunch all ordered and everything.

MRS. PALMER. Think of that! The lunch all ordered!

NEIL. (*Going towards them a little*) Good morning, Jane. Good morning Elsie. I'm terribly sorry but I—I can't help it. I really can't. Something's come up, something most unexpected, don't you see, and—(*Enter CYNTHIA at L. much to NEIL's annoyance*) Ah, this is my daughter, Cynthia.

MRS. PALMER. (*After a long, significant pause*) So that's the something. How do you do, Miss Sumner. I am Mrs. Palmer.

CYNTHIA. (*Going to MRS. PALMER delightedly*) Good morning.

NEIL. (*Forced to introduce the others*) And—er—Cynthia, this is Miss Davis and Mr. Mortimer. (*NEIL beholds his innocent daughter surrounded by his worldly friends.*)

CYNTHIA. (*Brightly and much pleased*) I'm very glad to know you both.

MRS. PALMER. (*To NEIL*) I see—I see—you didn't know she was coming.

NEIL. No—no—that's it—I didn't.

MRS. PALMER. Well, that's very simple. There's plenty of room in the car.

NEIL. Oh, thank you, but—

MRS. PALMER. (*Turning up a little—to CYNTHIA*) My dear, wouldn't you like to go to the races with us?

CYNTIIA. Yes, indeed. I'd love to. I've never seen any races. May I, daddy?

NEIL. (*Shaking his head*) I'm very sorry—but it's impossible.

ELSIE. Oh! I say now! Do be a good fellow!

NEIL. (*Frowning*) It's quite impossible. I don't wish to be disagreeable but—I've made other

plans. (*The three intruders now see that he is angry*)

MRS. PALMEER. Oh, well, of course, in that case, we'll have to give you up. Sorry.

ELSIE. I think it's too bad of you. I'm sure Miss Sumner would love the races.

NEIL. I'm very sorry.

CYNTHIA. But, daddy, I don't want to keep you home, if—

NEIL. (*Quietly*) Hush! My dear! Hush!

MRS. PALMER. (*Smiling darkly*) That's right, my child, heed the voice of authority. Improve your brief hour, Neil, for she'll grow up, you know.

ELSIE. Now what do you know about that, my dear?

MORTIMER. Neil, you give me more or less of a pain.

NEIL. Sorry, Billy—but I can't help it.

(MORTIMER shrugs his shoulders and goes out after the women.)

CYNTHIA. Daddy, why didn't you want to go with them. I should have loved it, I know, and now you're staying at home on my account and—and—

NEIL. Nonsense! My dear child. I was glad to have an excuse, now—

(Enter BETSY at L.)

CYNTHIA. (*Crossing to BETSY*) Oh Auntie, I'm afraid he'll get tired of me quickly if this goes on.

BETSY. Why?

CYNTHIA. Some people came in just now. (NEIL winces at the coming blow) To take him to the races and he wouldn't go on account of me.

BETSY. People? What people?

NEIL. (*Trying to shut her up*) Oh, what does it matter? We're not going, anyhow?

BETSY. (*Insisting*) What people?

CYNTHIA. Why, a Mrs. Palmer and a Miss Davis.

BETSY. (*With a crushing look at her brother*) Really!

CYNTHIA. Yes—and Mr. Mortimer.

BETSY. So?

CYNTHIA. Yes. And they asked me to go, too. But he wouldn't have it.

BETSY. It's just as well. The race-track is hard, y a place for a young girl.

CYNTHIA. (*Placing her arm through NEIL's in great pride*) Any place where my daddy goes is good enough for this young girl.

BETSY. (*Acidly*) Oh! Is it!

CYNTHIA. Yes, indeed.

BETSY. Well. I'll look in on you at tea time, Neil. (*Going*)

NEIL. Do. And Cynthia and I will go for a spin in the car, and then we'll lunch somewhere—Delmonico's—the Ritz—the Plaza—wherever she likes.

CYNTHIA. (*Joyously*) I don't care where, just so you go, too. (*Goes to BETSY and kisses her then goes to door of her room*) I'll just go and fix my hair. Good-bye, Aunty! I won't be a minute, Daddy. (*She runs into her room, leaving the door open*)

BETSY. (*Follows CYNTHIA with her eyes and then turns to NEIL—speaking quietly that CYNTHIA may not hear*) Well, now do you see what I mean?

NEIL. I beg your pardon.

BETSY. The birds of prey. We can't have this sort of thing.

NEIL. (*Turning away*) We—we'll go to the Port the day after tomorrow.

BETSY. I'm sorry it isn't today. (*At the door*) And, in the meantime, remember.

NEIL. Remember?

BETSY. Take care! (*She gives him a look and goes out. Through the open door of CYNTHIA's room the girl is heard exchanging a sentence or two of French with her maid*)

CYNTHIA. Therese! Aidez moi avec ma coiffure.

THERESE. Oui, mademoiselle.

CYNTHIA. Non, non, je ne le porterai pas ainsi aujourd'hui—(*Then she begins to hum a phrase or two of a song*)

(*NEIL listens a moment, then his face brightens, his body begins to sway in time with the song. His whole manner changes into that of a big hearted boy. He takes in a deep breath as if it were the air of Spring. He goes to the window and raises it, as if to let in all the Spring joy possible. Takes his cigar case out—takes a cigar, places it in his mouth—but the taste is bad and he puts it back in the case—puts case in pocket, looking toward the room that holds his daughter and listening to her voice—still under its spell. BENNETT enters with his cap and gloves.*)

BENNETT. The car's here, sir.

NEIL. (*Taking hat and gloves*) All right, Bennett. (*BENNETT goes out*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy, are you waiting?

NEIL. Yes, dear.

CYNTHIA. Please don't get discouraged, I won't be long .

NEIL. I've waited ten years. I can wait a little longer.

CYNTHIA. Ha! Ha! Ha! Oh, ce pauvre papa!  
(CYNTHIA's voice again takes up the little ballad  
she has been singing. And so, NEIL still waiting  
with his eyes upon her door,

*The curtain falls.*

## ACT II.

TIME: *Three weeks later.*

SCENE: *A bright, cheerful room in NEIL's home at Port Washington, Long Island. The light is that of a fine June mid-afternoon. A door at lower L. is the main entrance for visitors, though one may enter through the gardens at the centre. Another door is at lower R. The door at C. is one of Colonial design large and handsome. A large French window is set R. of door at middle distance in the flat. Another French window is at L. of door. At upper L. on the side wall is another window, but this does not extend to the floor. The door at C. is open and through the door and windows, one beholds a well trimmed garden and landscape with a church steeple rising in the distance. A brick walk is seen at back with hedge rows running across stage to the pathway at C. Two large garden urns filled with June flowers, joined to the hedge rows, are seen through the door. While off L. is seen a graceful pergola. The first drop behind hedge rows shows an extension of the pathway at C. leading up to a fountain flanked with flower*

*beds. Beyond is seen the smiling sloping lands- cape.*

The walls of the room are covered with a flowered Cretonne in which the predominant tone is a rich cream color. All the furniture in the room is white. A large old fashioned brick fireplace at R. is of dull cream colored bricks with white slabbing. The hood is covered with Cretonne like the walls. Above the fireplace under the mantel shelf is seen the inscription "East-West-Home's Best". The fireplace is banked with ferns and plants. On the mantel is set a old fashioned colonial clock, two silver photo frames, a pair of vases and a pair of candlesticks. An old fashioned chair foot rest is above mantel. A small writing desk with chair is set below mantel and above door. A small round table is set about middle R. with chairs R. and L. At R. is an armchair and another is set at L. below door. A single chair is up R. between window and door. Another chair breaks the corner at upper L. A grand piano is at upper L. just off C. A vase of June roses, a photo frame, and sheets of scattered music are on the piano. A piano bench is R. of piano. The piano is set with the keyboard screened from view of audience, that is, diagonally from R. to L. A settee is below piano on a line with the table. The doors at side are of rich mahogany. The door at C. is white with an old fashioned brass knocker attached. A jardiniere of pink flowers at R. of this door and another at L. below the window. Between the door and French windows on either side are hung oval mahogany framed portraits. French medallions are hung at R. and L. of the windows. Between window and door at L. is a

*large mahogany framed picture, and another large picture is on the wall at R. below the mantel. The subjects of the pictures are Colonial. Another French picture hangs on the wall below door at L. The baseboard and mouldings are done in white. The general tone of the room reveals refinement of a high degree without a touch of extravagance. The apartment is chaste but not in the least cold.*

*When we first see this room, FELLOWS is seated at the table with some legal papers spread before him. NEIL is at c. They are finishing an earnest conversation.*

NEIL. (*Walking up and down*) It does seem as if there ought to have been some way of preventing it.

FELLOWS. Well, I couldn't see any—as long as you insisted on letting her go on regarding herself as a wealthy woman.

NEIL. But couldn't you tell Ruth that these mines of Hanford's were—

FELLOWS. My dear chap, I did. Called in a mining expert, too. He made one of those yes and no reports, d'ye see? Wouldn't say the mines were any good and wouldn't say they weren't. The worst I could get him to say was that he regarded them as a highly speculative proposition and in no sense a conservative investment.

NEIL. And you sent Ruth this report?

FELLOWS. I did. But it was apparently all offset by Hanford's glowing letters. Evidently he told Ruth that his entire business future depended on floating those mines and that he had to have her help. So in she plunges. Well, it's all up now.

NEIL. Complete smash, eh?

FELLOWS. Seems to me the least Dick Hanford could do was to have the nerve to go and tell her himself. But no—he must needs come whining to me. Well, breaking it to 'em gently is my long suit. (*Rising*)

NEIL. Hm! Well, no use in half way measures. So—you just fix it up with Hanford to hold his tongue about the smash and draw on me for Ruth's dividends whenever they would fall due if there were any.

FELLOWS. You mean it!

NEIL. Of course.

FELLOWS. You're going to save that skunk again?

NEIL. No—no—my dear chap, that isn't it at all.

FELLOWS. That's the way it works out, isn't it? He ought to go to jail.

NEIL. That wouldn't help Ruth, would it? No—no—let's leave her what illusions we can. (*Sits down*) I tell you, Ned, I've lived long enough in this funny world to realize the value of a genuine first class, A. No. 1, hale and hearty illusion. Ruth's got one about her brother. Let her keep it. That's all.

FELLOWS. (*Shaking his head*) This is all most unbusiness like.

NEIL. Who said it wasn't? Before I get so that I can't afford to be unbusinesslike now and then, I hope I choke—that's all.

FELLOWS. She'll find out sometime—sure to—

NEIL. All right—but it won't be through me.

FELLOWS. But you see—

NEIL. Now, Ned, we've been all over this before. Ruth wouldn't take a dollar from me, if she knew it, and—well—women know what to do with

money. And if that weren't enough, there's Cynthia—don't you see?

FELLOWS. You know, if she ever does find out, I hate to think what she'll say to me.

NEIL. Cheer up, Ned, your case is not exceptional. Half the lawyers in Christendom pass nine tenths of their time trying not to get found out.

FELLOWS. You're very comforting.

(Enter BETSY from L.)

BETSY. My dear Ned. (*He advances to meet her*)

FELLOWS. How are you, Betsy?

BETSY. I am so glad to see you!

FELLOWS. My dear Friend, I am overwhelmed by the cordiality of this reception.

BETSY. And if you knew how few visitors we have to whom I can say that—

FELLOWS. (*Turn to NEIL*) Dear me, Neil!

NEIL. Oh, our Betsy is getting to be a social martinet

FELLOWS. Really. This is a new side of her character.

BETSY. Oh, Neil must have his joke, but if you knew—the Charlie Williamses and Hollinses and—

NEIL. Now, I draw the line there. Hollins hasn't been here at all.

BETSY. I don't see why you go on supporting that—snake.

NEIL. Oh, he's got to live, hasn't he?

BETSY. I don't see the necessity. He—he—he's an insect.

NEIL. Now, my dear sis, a man can't be both a snake and an insect.

BETSY. He can. He's leading a double life.

FELLOWS. (*Shakes hand with BETSY*) Well, I've got to gallop, I'm afraid.

BETSY. So soon?

FELLOWS. Yes. I really must.

NEIL. Got a motor?

FELLOWS. No, I'm going to walk. It's fine for the figure.

NEIL. I'll stroll along with you.

BETSY. Do come again soon, Ned, I'm always sorry to see your back. (*Sitting at piano*)

FELLOWS. Thanks, I will.

NEIL. (*As he takes his hat from the piano. To BETSY*) By the way, did you tell McPherson to spray the roses.

BETSY. I did.

NEIL. Good. Can't have any bugs eating up Cynthia's roses.

BETSY. It's a pity you can't have McPherson—spray your visiting list.

NEIL. (*Playfully*) Come along, Ned, before it gets worse. (*He takes his arm. They go out at rear, turning r. BETSY at the piano begins to play the music of the little French song that is open on the rack. As she plays, CYNTHIA appears at the French window and comes in humming the song. Presently she takes up the words and sings them as she pulls on her gloves. She is dressed for driving. The words of the song runs as follows,*

"Ne parlez pas tant, Lisandre,  
Quand nous tendons nos filets;  
Les oiseaux vont vous entendre,  
Et s'en fuirent de bouquets.  
Aimez moi sans me le dire,  
Aimez moi sans me le dire,  
A quoi bon ton ces grands mots?"

Calmez ce bruyant delire  
Cas ca fait peur aux oiseaux  
Calmez ce bruyant delire,  
Cas ca fait peur aux oiseaux."

CYNTHIA. (*Laughing delightedly*) Well!  
You see you've got it. (*Laying one glove on the table while she buttons the other*) Don't you like it?

BETSY. Yes. It's charming.

CYNTHIA. I think it's a peach.

BETSY. (*Rising*) A what?

CYNTHIA. A peach—a corker.

BETSY. Where on earth did you get those expressions?

CYNTHIA. (*Laughingly*) Oh, from one of the Carley twins.

BETSY. What?

CYNTHIA. You see, I'm getting Americanized.

BETSY. Yes. With a vengeance. The Carleys, indeed! Have you any more as good as those?

CYNTHIA. Yes, indeed. I've learned that when you don't like anything, you say—let me see—what is it? Oh, yes! You say, "It's the limit."

BETSY. Goodness!

CYNTHIA. And when anything surprises you, you say, "Well, wouldn't that—wouldn't that frost you!"

BETSY. Do you ever hear me use such expressions?

CYNTHIA. No—o—I, don't think so.

BETSY. Well—please don't let me hear you say them either. They're not nice.

CYNTHIA. All right, Aunty dear, but how was I to know? I'm sorry. Oh, I've vexed you, haven't I? (*Takes her hands*)

BETSY. Nonsense, dear, no, of course you haven't. It's all right. Come, now, be off with you!

You've only time for a short drive, today you know.

(Enter BENNETT at L.)

BENNETT. (To BETSY, who receives the card he offers) For you, ma'am.

BETSY. (She starts, conceals it from CYNTHIA) Oh! Ask her in!

(BENNETT exits.)

CYNTHIA. Who is it, Aunty? Anybody I know?

BETSY. Never you mind, Miss Inquisitive. Run along, now, (CYNTHIA kisses her and goes out c. and off R.)

BETSY. (Coming down c. R., with an expression of astonishment) Ruth!

(BENNETT opens the door and stands up a little allowing RUTH SUMNER to pass him, after which he exits. The women embrace effectionately.)

RUTH. My dear Betsy!

BETSY. How well you are looking Ruth. Did you motor down?

RUTH. Yes.

BETSY. Oh! I am so glad to see you. Won't you sit down?

RUTH. And I'm glad to see you Betsy. I'm always glad to see you—But—(They sit down) I've come—to see Neil.

BETSY. (Puzzled) To see Neil! (Then making the wrong interference) Oh, Ruth, I'm so glad. I can't tell you how—

RUTH. No—no—it isn't that. I'm sorry—but it isn't! It's about Cynthia.

BETSY. But she was going up to you this afternoon for your birthday.

RUTH. Yes. I don't mean to stop her. On the contrary—

BETSY. My dear Ruth, what do you mean?

RUTH. I mean to ask you if you do not think that when she comes to me this afternoon, it ought to be to stay.

BETSY. (*Pained*) Oh, Ruth. Is that quite kind?

RUTH. I do not mean it unkindly. I wouldn't do one single thing to hurt poor Neil.

BETSY. No—no—I know you wouldn't.

RUTH. (*Beginning to show some feeling*) After all, there are things in my life that I can't forget—things that—(*Breaks a little and looks about her*) How this old room brings them back to me. It hasn't changed much. And all along the road I knew every turn—even the roadside daisies seemed the same. It was on a June day that I came here first—Lord! How long ago—and I, a girl—scarcely older than Cynthia—and how—(*She stops, overcome by her memories*) Well, a good deal of water has run under the bridge since then. But you haven't answered my question.

BETSY. Question?

RUTH. Ought I allow CYNTHIA to return?

BETSY. I don't understand you.

RUTH. Well, I've been a good deal disquieted in one way and another. Her letters for example—little things that slipped in—nothing of themselves but significant as a whole. And then what she says of people she meets. The Carleys for example. And (*Rising*) Jane Palmer!

BETSY. (*Sadly*) Yes—yes—I know.

RUTH. (*Rumaging in her handbag*) Why, I wouldn't have them in my house.

BETSY. But they're not intimate here, my dear.

RUTH. What's the difference? She meets them, it seems. And then, things like this. (*She gets clipping from her handbag*) Have you seen it?

BETSY. No. (*RUTH hands clipping to BETSY who begins to read the clipping*) "North Shore gossips are much interested in the sprightly Mrs. Palmer just now, especially in the attentions she is receiving from a certain wealthy man who is conspicuous in racing and yachting circles and who has long been separated from his wife. There's no denying the pair look well together, and seem to appreciate each other's society keenly, though the views of "poor old Charlie", the lady's favorite description of her aged husband, are not generally known." Oh, dear. Oh, that's not true—that's not true.

RUTH. I daresay. And if it were—it's—it's none of my business perhaps, except as it affects Cynthia. (*BETSY gives her back the clipping*) And who, do you think, had the insolence to speak to me the other day as I was lunching with the Burnhams at the Ritz! Nick Hollins—no less. Oh, yes—and he was full of news of Cynthia.

BETSY. Why, I don't think he's ever seen her.

RUTH. Well, now, perhaps you begin to see why I came. I don't wish to be ungenerous to Neil, but—there it is.

BETSY. Oh, it would be a pity. The child is so happy—she's positively radiant—and as for Neil—why he's as merry as a boy.

RUTH. Yes—yes. I can remember a time when we—we were merry—together. Where is he? I've got to see him.

BETSY. He's gone to the gate with Ned Fellows. Shall I send for him?

RUTH. Please do. If she's not coming back, he's entitled to know it!

(BENNETT enters L.)

BENNETT. Mr. Hollins is asking for Mr. Neil, ma'am.

RUTH. (*Astonished and looking at BETSY who has turned to look at her on the announcement and then helplessly avoids her gaze*) Mr. Hollins!

BENNETT. Yes, ma'am.

BETSY. Show him in. (BENNETT starts to go) Bennett.

BENNETT. Yes, ma'am.

BETSY. And let me know when he's gone.

BENNETT. I will, ma'am. (*He goes out*)

BETSY. (*To RUTH*) We'll go to my room this way. (*They go r.*) He never comes here—really he doesn't.

RUTH. (*She goes out r.*) Well, he's here now.

BETSY. Drat him! (*Follows her out*)

(Enter BENNETT and HOLLINS at L.)

BENNETT. If you'll take a seat, sir, I'll let Mr. Neil know you're here.

(NEIL is seen coming on at back from off r.)

HOLLINS. Thanks, Bennett, I will. (BENNETT exits)

NEIL. (*As he comes in c.*) Hello!

HOLLINS. How d'ye do?

NEIL. How are you?

HOLLINS. Oh, I'm as well as could be expected of anyone as wicked as myself. I think God must be sleeping.

NEIL. What brings you out here at this time of day? Why aren't you at the track?

HOLLINS. Oh we've only one starter today—

the Black Prince—and he's only in for a work out.

NEIL. The Black Prince! Humph! Has he ever finished in the money yet?

HOLLINS. Not yet.

NEIL. Last time I saw him run he finished so far back that I didn't know whether he was last in the third race or first in the fourth. Well?

HOLLINS. Well, what?

NEIL. What is it? I'm rather busy.

HOLLINS. (*Amused*) Busy? In this hole?

NEIL. I said busy.

HOLLINS. (*Lays hat and gloves on table*) Well, it's business that brings me here—your business, too—so you needn't be so short about it. It's our weeding-out sale.

NEIL. I've told you, Nick, that I don't wish to have that sort of thing brought down here. We can attend to that when I come to the track.

HOLLINS. Quite so, old chap. But as you haven't been to the track in a month—(*Finishes with a shrug of his shoulders*)

NEIL. Well, what is it?

HOLLINS. Here's a list of the no accounts. Tierney and I have agreed on them but, of course, we want your O. K. before going any further. Have a look. (*Offer him the list*)

NEIL. (*Gives it a cursory look and hands it back*) Oh, I daresay it's all right. Let 'em go.

HOLLINS. But, I'd like to have you——

NEIL. Haven't I told you I don't want to be bothered with it? You want my O. K. and you've got it. Isn't that enough?

HOLLINS. Well, for the owner of the third most important string in training, I must say you show precious little interest.

NEIL. Not at all. I—I'm interested in other matters just now. That's all.

HOLLINS. The simple life, eh? May I sit down?

NEIL. (*Reluctantly, by piano*) Why—certainly.

HOLLINS. (*Sits at table*) Awfully good of you. So now it's all for the sweet and holy joys of domesticity, is it?

NEIL. (*Stands in front of piano*) See here, Nick—!

HOLLINS. Oh, I don't decry them—all very sweet and charming—no doubt, delightful—poetic—but hardly in your line, are they?

NEIL. Why not?

HOLLINS. Well, I was thinking it was a little late for you to go in for that sort of thing, eh?

NEIL. Late?

HOLLINS. Thought you'd had your try at all that—years ago.

NEIL. Look here, Nick. I've told you that I'm busy. So if you've nothing to offer us but jeers, we'll excuse you. We don't require any bile today, thanks.

HOLLINS. (*Sarcastically*) May I smoke—or is that against the new rules, too?

NEIL. Don't be more of an ass than you can help, Nick. (*Sits on bench and looks over music on piano*)

HOLLINS. (*Lighting a cigarette*) I suppose that means that I may. Thanks. (*NEIL looks at him impatiently, and picks out the same tune BETSY played with one finger, HOLLINS smiles sarcastically and says*) Exquisite! Exquisite. And what execution! (*NEIL scowls at him and then comes down to him*)

NEIL. See here, Nick, you want something. Out with it.

HOLLINS. What makes you think so?

NEIL. Wey, you're Nick Hollins, aren't you? What is it? Money, I suppose.

HOLLINS. Well, as a matter of fact, if you could let me have an advance of say, two hundred, it would come in mighty handy.

NEIL. (*Wearily*) Certainly. I'll send you a check tonight.

HOLLINS. Thanks, old man. Excessively nice of you.

NEIL. All the same——

HOLLINS. Oh, yes, I know—but, if you don't mind, it's an advance I want, not a lecture. Or send the lecture with the check.

NEIL. I was only going to say that you don't seem to be catching up with these—er—advances—very rapidly.

HOLLINS. My dear Neil, you were always addicted to the obvious. Don't I know it? It's my infernal luck. Damned if I ever knew such an unlucky chap as my worthy but unfortunate self. Why, if I were to bet you that you have your hand in your pocket this instant, I'd lose somehow.

NEIL. (*Who actually has his hand in his pocket*) You would—because, you see, speaking of advances, it's your hand that's in my pocket.

HOLLINS. Be that as it may. (*Rising, picking up hat and gloves*) I must be off unless I can be of further service.

NEIL. You can't.

HOLLINS. Always longing to do good, I am, and nobody will let me. It's hard. It's very hard.

(*Opens door l.*)

NEIL. Oh, I say, Nick.

HOLLINS. Yes?

NEIL. Now that you're here——

HOLLINS. Yes. If only I weren't—but now that I am——?

NEIL. I want you to drop down to the stable

and look over that Canadian hunter of mine. He's gone lame.

HOLLINS. What's the trouble?

NEIL. Don't know. But you might look him over. Haven't been able to ride him for three days.

HOLLINS. All right. I will.

NEIL. And report—(HOLLINS turns) by telephone.

HOLLINS. (Going) Rather pointed but—I'll overlook it. (He goes out and NEIL sits at desk to scribble a note)

(CYNTHIA runs in from off R. humming a tune.  
She bubbles with high spirits and the sheer  
joy of being alive.)

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy dear.

NEIL. Hello, sweetheart.

CYNTHIA. (Coming down R. and laying an armful of daisies on the table) I do wish you could have come with me, I've had a heavenly drive. (Crosses over and places her hat and coat on piano)

NEIL. I wish I could, dear. (Rises) But there were things to do. How did Gyp behave?

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy, that is the heavenliest pony! Only she threw a shoe. So I had to come home too soon.

NEIL. We'll have that fixed right away.

CYNTHIA. See what I've got here. (Gives him an armful of daisies) I gathered them especially for you on the edge of the loveliest meadow you ever saw. Aren't they heavenly?

SUMNER. Thanks, my dear! They are beautiful!

CYNTHIA. And so wild. Sometimes I think the loveliest things are the wild things. Oh, I don't

want to go to town this afternoon. I don't want to leave this heavenly place and you, daddy, even just for a day or two.

NEIL. But think how your mother will feel if you're not with her on her birthday.

CYNTHIA. Oh, I'm going, of course, and I want to go, too. I want to and I don't, all at once. Sometimes it's so hard to know what to do. Don't you ever feel all mixed up with one thing pulling you one way and another thing pulling you another way, all at the same time?

NEIL. (*With a sympathetic, compassionate smile*) My dear, you are certainly growing up. That is life—just one thing pulling you one way and another thing pulling you another way—and all at the same time. (*Rising*) But don't you think you ought to be getting ready for your journey? You have to leave the house at half past four, you know.

CYNTHIA. Oh, there's lots of time. Therese will pack my bag. I haven't much to do. And, oh daddy, I want to ask you something.

NEIL. Ask and receive.

CYNTHIA. Do you suppose you could take us to the boat races at New London next week on the Roamer?

NEIL. Why not?

CYNTHIA. Oh, wouldn't it be splendid! Mother's told me all about the boat races.

NEIL. Has she?

CYNTHIA. Oh, yes, when she was a girl. And is it just the same now—the river full of yachts with their guns roaring, and their whistles screaming, as the winning crew flashes over the line? Oh, it must be heavenly! (*Throws her arms about NEIL and impulsively embraces him*) Oh, daddy dear,

it's been so long since I've seen you. (*In French*)  
Je t'ai tant desire.

NEIL. So it has—quite an hour and a half.

CYNTHIA. Plus que ca, j'en suis sure. (*Looks at her watch*) Exactly an hour and thirty-five minutes.

NEIL. As long as that? Well, in future we mustn't waste so much time. Eh?

CYNTHIA. (*Taking a daisy she wears and puts it in his buttonhole and steps back, to admire it*) There, daddy, that's just what you needed. What did you do with the one I gave you this morning?

NEIL. I was afraid I'd lose it, so I've got it pressing in Mr. Webster's justly famous dictionary. (*He takes her hands they laugh together*)

CYNTHIA. What an idea! I wonder if any other girl's daddy ever says such nice things.

NEIL. I wonder if any other daddy ever had such a girl to say 'em to.

CYNTHIA. (*Holding up a warning finger to him*) Hush! Anybody overhearing us might think we are fond of each other—mighthn't they—

NEIL. (*Playfully*) Oh, do you think so?

CYNTHIA. Oui, et ca serait une gaucherie affreuse, n'est ca pas?

NEIL. Whereas, as a matter of fact, we're not, are we?

CYNTHIA. No, indeed!

NEIL. (*Taking her hand*) We simply hate each other, don't we?

CYNTHIA. We can hardly stand the sight of each other, can we? (*They both laugh. She gives him a hug*) Oh, daddy! You were on a winning crew at New London one year, weren't you?

NEIL. Why, who told you, child?

CYNTHIA. Mother.

NEIL. Oh, yes, to be sure—it was a long time ago.

CYNTHIA. Ah, it must have been fine—splendid. Didn't it make you feel sporty?

NEIL. (*Jarred*) Sporty?

CYNTHIA. Yes.

NEIL. Where did you get that word?

CYNTHIA. (*Reflecting*) I don't know—oh, yes, I do—I think it must have been Mrs. Palmer. (*NEIL's expression hardens as he turns for a brief instant*) She uses lots of words I never heard before. She's very clever, isn't she?

NEIL. (*A little bitterly and wishing to avoid the subject turns to go*) Oh, yes, she's clever enough.

CYNTHIA. (*Quickly going to him and placing a detaining hand on his arm*) Why doesn't anybody ever see her husband?

NEIL. He's very old dear—old and feeble. (*He tries to get away*)

CYNTHIA. (*Detaining him as before*) She must have been awfully in love with him, mustn't she?

NEIL. (*Awkwardly*) I—I suppose so.

CYNTHIA. I mean—to marry him when he was so old and feeble. Why didn't she marry him before he got to be so old?

NEIL. He's her second husband, dear.

CYNTHIA. Oh! And she lost her first husband?

NEIL. Well she—There was a divorce.

CYNTHIA. (*Sympathetically*) Oh, dear! What was the trouble?

NEIL. I—I forget—I don't remember—something—but there; you're going to leave me in a few moments. Let's talk of somthing nicer! Here! (*Takes her hand and leads her up to the veranda*) Suppose you stand by the door, looking off side-wise—so with your profile against the sky—so—that's right. (*He backs into the room, and down*)

*to piano and sits on the bench looking at her)*

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy, you do the funniest things.  
*(Turns her face to him)* What's this one for?

NEIL. No! No! Please—don't turn your face  
into the shadow.

CYNTHIA. *(Turning back to the profile view)*  
But I don't understand—

NEIL. Don't you remember? You and Aunt  
Betsy came down here together. I came an hour  
or two later, and the first time I ever saw you  
under this roof, you were standing right there—just  
like that. I shall like to remember you like that—  
always—when—when—perhaps you are not here—  
any more.

CYNTHIA. *(Looking off L. breaks into an ex-  
clamation)* Oh!

NEIL. *(Going to her)* Eh!

CYNTHIA. *(Pointing off)* There's funny old  
McPherson breaking his back over my precious  
tulip beds. *(Comes down onto NEIL)* He and I were  
up, oh, so very early today. *(His arm around her*  
*—they come down slowly and over to table)* almost  
as early as the birds—I wanted to feed them and  
then to pick such a lovely rose for you, Daddy, the  
loveliest of the whole garden. I marked it out the  
day before—and, what do you think? *(He looks  
questioningly)* A worm had spoiled it.

NEIL. It happens so.

CYNTHIA. I almost cried. It was such a heav-  
enly posy. *(Sitting on her heels in front of him)*  
And McPherson says the only way to be sure of  
preventing that is to keep the buds under cover  
till they blossom out. Then they can protect them-  
selves better. C'est drôle, n'est ce pas? Why must  
there be such things as worms, mon papa?

NEIL. I don't know, petite. But here they are

and the worst of it is, they seem to be particularly fond of buds.

CYNTHIA. Yes, and the loveliest blossoms are the most delicate.

NEIL. It's that way with everything that's beautiful—my dear.

CYNTHIA. (*Reproachfully*) Oh!

NEIL. Eh!

CYNTHIA. "My dear"! Oh, say it in French, as I taught you, daddy.

NEIL. Ma cherie.

CYNTHIA. That's right! Now say "I worship you!"

NEIL. (*Remembering with some difficulty*) Ah, Je t'adore.

CYNTHIA. Good! Now put them together.

NEIL. Je t'adore, ma cherie.

CYNTHIA. Bien! (*In French*) Tu es l'eleve le plus intelligent de mon école. Don't you like my system of instruction? (*Rising*)

NEIL. (*Rising*) It's a great improvement upon all others. When I acquired my present magnificent ignorance of the French language, I got it out of a book that taught you to say "Have you the green umbrella of my grandmother?" And "No, I have not the green umbrella of your grandmother, but I have the red parasol of my grandmother's aunt." (*CYNTHIA laughing takes him by the arm and leads him up to piano. She sits at piano and NEIL sits beside her. CYNTHIA has meantime picked up a sheet of music on the piano and is looking through it*) Oh, by the way, dearest, what's that little song about—the one you've been humming so much lately? (*He picks is out as before with one finger*) The one that goes like this.

CYNTHIA. Oh, this one. (*She takes the sheet of music from the piano and they both sit on the*

*settee*) It's all about a girl who goes out to feed the birds and a young man who's in love with her comes out, too.

NEIL. To feed the birds?

CYNTHIA. (*Smiling a little shyly*) No, I don't think so. Because, this is what she says to him. First, I'll tell you the story and then I'll sing it to you in French.

NEIL. Splendid. Come now, what is it the girl says to the young man?

(CYNTHIA translates the song from a sheet of music.)

CYNTHIA. Well, here is what she says. "Please don't talk so much, Lysander."

NEIL. Lysander?

CYNTHIA. Yes—that's his name?

NEIL. Not a very romantic name, is it?

CYNTHIA. No, it isn't. I don't think I could fall in love with anybody named Lysander.

NEIL. Might as well call him Lycurgus.

CYNTHIA. Hah! (*Again she translates*) "Please don't talk so much, Lysander."

NEIL. Oh, I say, now let's call him something else.

CYNTHIA. I'll tell you, I'll give it the French pronunciation—Lisandre—that's much better.

NEIL. So it is—yes, I think that might do.

CYNTHIA. "Please don't talk so much, Lisandre."

NEIL. (*Interrupting*) But we really couldn't put up with Lysander, could we?

CYNTHIA. Now, daddy, we'll never hear what the girl said to him. (*Begins again, stumbling at places over little phrases and NEIL occasionally breaking in with some little comment*) "Please don't talk so much, Lisandre, while we feed the little

birds. Because the birds perhaps might hear and from' the wood fly away. Love me but don't talk about it. What's the good of all the words? Calm this deep and burning passion or you'll scare the little birds. What? You say that I am cruel? Truly you have lost your wits, and you say that I am faithless? Please, I beg you, make no noise. What? You'll hang yourself, you tell me, in the branches of this tree? Oh, you naughty, bad Lisandre, that would scare the little birds." (Rises) Now, I'll sing it, shall I?

- NEIL. Good! (*She takes him by the hand and pulls him up to the piano. Sitting on bench and NEIL stands*) You know it is quite apparent to me that your friend Lisandre doesn't care much about the little birds.

(MRS. PALMER and MORTIMER are seen approaching at rear.)

CYNTIIIA. He doesn't seem much worried about them, does he? (*She plays a few bars, being interrupted by the entrance of MRS. PALMER and MORTIMER*)

MRS. PALMER. (*In doorway*) I hope we don't intrude, Neil. (*CYNTHIA stops playing and, rising, goes to greet MRS. PALMER. NEIL is evidently ill pleased*)

NEIL. Er—ah—not at all.

MRS. PALMER. And how are you, Cynthia?

CYNTIIIA. (*Clearly pleased*) Good afternoon, Mrs. Palmer, I am glad to see you.

MRS. PALMER. Do you remember Mr. Mortimer?

CYNTIIIA. Oh, yes. (*Gives him her hand*) You were with Mrs. Palmer the day daddy and I couldn't go to the races, weren't you?

MORTIMER. What a memory!

CYNTHIA. Oh, I don't forget any of his friends.

MRS. PALMER. Weren't you expecting us, Neil?

CYNTHIA. Oh, dear. I quite forgot to tell him you were coming. Oh, I am sorry. You see, daddy, I met Mrs. Palmer in the village yesterday afternoon. We had a lovely long talk and tea at the Carleys. (*NEIL and MRS. PALMER exchange glances*) and then she said she would call today, and then, I'm such a silly, I went and forgot all about it. Oh, do forgive me, please do.

MRS. PALMER. Why, naturally, my dear. Say no more about it. (*They sit on settee*)

MORTIMER. The main idea, Neil, is to get a tip from you on the Suburban. You've got two entries and you ought to know what they're likely to do. King Pepper and Mrs. Ebbsmith, aren't they? Now, give it to us straight, and remember—we need the money.

NEIL. You'd better ask Nick Hollins.

MORTIMER. But I don't want to go up to town.

NEIL. You won't have to. Nick's here—down at the stable.

MORTIMER. All right, I'll go ask him. I'll tell him you said so. Otherwise he might give me the wrong dope.

NEIL. Oh hardly.

MORTIMER. I wouldn't put it past him.

NEIL. Why, he owes you money, doesn't he?

MORTIMER. Not a cent, thank God.

NEIL. What? Why does he discriminate against you?

MORTIMER. He doesn't. I discriminate against him. Well good-bye. (*Goes out*)

NEIL. Good-bye. (*Turns as MRS. PALMER and CYNTHIA break into a laugh*)

NEIL. (*To CYNTHIA*) My dear. (*Both rise*) Mrs. Palmer will excuse you, I'm sure. (*To MRS.*

PALMER) You see, Cynthia is going to town this afternoon to spend two days with her mother, and she's barely time to rest up a bit and dress for the journey.

CYNTHIA. Oh, I don't need to rest, daddy.

NEIL. Well, do it to please me, won't you?

CYNTHIA. Oh, that's not fair, when you know very well I'll do anything if you put it that way.

NEIL. But I don't wish to send a tired girl back to her mother. It wouldn't speak very well for my care of her, would it? Come now, off with you.

CYNTHIA. You see, I've got to go.

MRS. PALMER. Yes, I see. Still the dutiful child.

CYNTHIA. (*Gives Mrs. Palmer her hand, then turns to her father*) Good bye, you cruel, slave driver. (*Kisses him and runs over to L. opening door*)

MRS. PALMER. She's fallen dead in love with you, Neil, hasn't she?

CYNTHIA. (*Turning in the doorway*) Oh, daddy, you'll be here when I go so I'll see you again?

NEIL. Oh, yes, I'll be here.

CYNTHIA. That's all. (*Goes out*)

NEIL. Go along with you now — go along. Sit down, Jane. (*She does so*) Are you well?

MRS. PALMER. (*Bitterly*) Oh, what does that matter? Yes, I'm well. Got a terrible head. Very dusty on the ocean last night—but I'm well enough.

NEIL. I suppose you've seen that precious scandal about us?

MRS. PALMER. Oh, yes. Several kind friends have sent me clippings. Fortunately, poor old Charlie can't read anything but the very largest print.

NEIL. Jane! I've always had an idea you liked me.

MRS. PALMER. Why so I do.

NEIL. That you'd do me a service if you could.

MRS. PALMER. So I would—(*With enthusiasm*)

NEIL. Well you can. Will you?

MRS. PALMER. Name it.

NEIL. I want you to help me keep some of these bounders away.

MRS. PALMER. Eh?

NEIL. Oh, not from me. God knows they can't hurt me—but from my little maid.

MRS. PALMER. (*Cynically*) Mustn't soil the pretty dove's wings, eh?

NEIL. (*Reproachfully*) You don't mean that, Jane.

MRS. PALMER. Don't I?

NEIL. I'm sure you don't.

MRS. PALMER. Oh, come now, you might as well be frank.

NEIL. Frank?

MRS. PALMER. When you said keep those bounders away, what did you mean?

NEIL. Exactly what I said.

MRS. PALMER. Didn't you mean that you'd like me to stay away myself?

NEIL. My dear Jane—

MRS. PALMER. I'm just as big a bounder as any of them and you know it.

NEIL. No, you're not—or you wouldn't know it—

MRS. PALMER. (*Her elbow resting on table, she raises her hand and, wearily resting her head, says bitterly*) Oh, I wish I were dead.

NEIL. My dear Jane, turn your mind back—to what you were, say fifteen or even ten years ago—

MRS. PALMER. (*In anguish*) No, no—that's what I want to forget.

NEIL. Why forget anything as lovely as that? What you were then so is my Cynthia and—I want to keep her so. Will you help me?

MRS. PALMER. (*Wearily*) Oh, I'll stay away from you. That's what you mean, of course. But I'm only one. You ought to have begun long ago, Neil. I'm afraid it's too late now. Our characters are nothing but the lives we've led, the friends we've made and kept, the thoughts we've thought, the habits we've formed. You can't change those things in a day. You might as well try to wish the wrinkles out of your face or the nails off your fingers.

NEIL. I—I'm afraid you're right.

MRS. PALMER. Right! Oh, I am most accursedly correct, believe me. Why is it we can't know those things till it is too late?

NEIL. I give it up. It's like drifting down a swift stream until the rapids appear. There's no hope of breasting that current successfully. Your only chance is to pull ashore and trudge painfully back and long before you reach the starting point the night comes down.

MRS. PALMER. Well, I'm still drifting.

NEIL. And I'm trying to pull ashore. Come now, won't you help me?

MRS. PALMER. Unfortunately, Neil, we're not in the same boat. And I might pull my heart out and it wouldn't move your boat an inch. Moreover, our fellow passengers are very different. I've got an octogenarian husband in my boat and you've got—a child in yours.

NEIL. Well, you chose your fellow passenger, you know.

MRS. PALMER. Yes, on account of his—baggage.

NEIL. While my fellow passenger—God bless her!—deliberately swam out to my boat and climbed aboard. There ought to be some kind of marine insurance to cover a case like this.

MRS. PALMER. Well, there isn't. But at least I can keep my boat from colliding with yours—and—I will. (*Gives him her hand*)

NEIL. If I were to thank you——

MRS. PALMER. Oh, thank me by all means, if you like. Frankly, I think I deserve it, for the thing will not be easy. And I think I must have lost all sense of pride to promise it. (*He is about to speak in protest but she stops him with a gesture*) Oh, don't protest. It isn't necessary. Still it's rather quaint, isn't it?

NEIL. Quaint?

MRS. PALMER. Yes, my taking—this sort of thing from you and—swallowing it. (*There's an awkward pause*) Do you know, I sometimes think things might have been different if you and I had been in the same boat from the first?

NEIL. (*Awkwardly*) My dear Jane, I can't tell you how sorry I——

MRS. PALMER. Oh, no condoleances, please. (*Wistfully*) All the same, I like to think so—and, if you've no objection, I'll go on thinking so. It can't do any harm, can it?

NEIL. None in the world, and very likely it may be true.

MRS. PALMER. Thanks—thanks! That's kind of you. (*Again she grows ironical*) And now the congregation will unite in singing "Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore."

NEIL. Ah! Now you're going to spoil it all—all your generosity.

MRS. PALMER. Not at all. Merely an echo out of my Presbyterian youth. Merely an echo—the

emptiest of all empty things. Well, I must be off!

NEIL. Won't you wait for Billy?

MRS. PALMER. No, I'll drive past the stables and pick him up there. When you're going the thing to do is to go. Good bye. (*Offers her hand*)

NEIL. Good bye. (*He takes her hand in both of his*) and good luck.

(BETSY opens the door at r. RUTH stands just behind her.)

BETSY. Oh! I thought——

NEIL. (*Turns*) Ruth! (*There's an embarrassed pause all around. Then NEIL pulls himself together*) You remember Mrs. Palmer, whom you used to know as Jane Prentice.

RUTH. (*Coldly*) I remember her perfectly. How do you do?

MRS. PALMER. How do you do? (*To BETSY*) Good afternoon, Miss Sumner.

BETSY. (*Coldly*) Good afternoon.

MRS. PALMER. You'll pardon me, I know. I was just going. Good bye. (*She turns and goes up followed by NEIL, who escorts her out*)

RUTH. (*As BETSY closes the door by which they entered*) It was time—high time.

(MRS. PALMER goes out of sight along verandah and NEIL comes back.)

NEIL. Ruth! (*She does not answer*)

BETSY. I'm sorry to be so stupid, Neil. But I understood Bennett to say you were alone.

RUTH. Where is Cynthia?

BETSY. In her room, I think.

RUTH. Will you see that she doesn't interrupt us? I'd rather she doesn't know that I've been

here. I must be off before her so as to be at home if possible when she arrives.

BETSY. (*Opening door at L.*) I'll keep her away. But be quick. There's not much time.  
(*She goes out L.*)

NEIL. (*Stiffly*) Won't you sit down?

RUTH. Thanks. (*She sits at the table. During this scene the light gradually fades as the summer storm approaches*)

NEIL. I hope you're well.

RUTH. Very.

NEIL. You're looking well.

RUTH. Thank you.

NEIL. Why didn't you let me know you were coming?

RUTH. So as to give you time to set the scene?

NEIL. Have I deserved that?

RUTH. Listen, Neil. I am returning to France this week. You will be able to guess why?

NEIL. Why?

RUTH. There's no use beating about the bush. I'm going to take Cynthia away.

NEIL. (*Rising*) Ruth!

RUTH. When she comes to me this afternoon it will be for good.

NEIL. You're going to take her away from me?

RUTH. Yes.

NEIL. But why? Why?

RUTH. (*Slowly and determinedly*) Don't you know?

NEIL. But I tell you the child was never so happy in her life—you don't know—you've no idea—

RUTH. (*Rising*) It was a mistake to let her come to you at all. But it was well meant. In spite of everything I hoped that—well, no matter. I suppose nobody can reconstruct his life on demand, conjure up a new character, new friends, new sur-

roundings, as a magician produces a rabbit out of a hat. It's too much to expect. (*Turning away*)

NEIL. I don't quite understand you.

RUTH. (*Turning to him*) Do you wish Cynthia to grow up to be like most of your friends? (*Pause*) Or do you wish her to lose her faith in you?

NEIL. No! No! Oh, no .

RUTH. Then I must take her away, or one of those two things will happen.

NEIL. Oh, no—no—I don't believe it.

RUTH. (*Producing clipping which she carries tucked in her glove*) I suppose you've seen this thing.

NEIL. (*Giving it a glance*) It's a contemptible falsehood—contemptible! (*RUTH gives him a searching look*) Do you doubt it?

RUTH. (*Facing him—evading an answer*) Suppose Cynthia were to see it?

NEIL. She wouldn't understand it if she did.

RUTH. Not now—but soon—she's growing up.

NEIL. Yes. She's going to be a splendid woman. God bless her!

RUTH. So she is. but only if—

NEIL. If ?

RUTH. If we help her. All these people—are they the sort that you want her to be like—the sort of riff raff you fill your house with—Nick Hollins, Billy Mortimer, or—(*A little bitterness stealing into her tone*) or the heroine of this pretty paragraph?

NEIL. Ah! You mustn't misunderstand poor Jane. You mustn't Why before you came in we were just—

RUTH. (*Turning to him*) Spare me—please—please—

NEIL. (*Determined she shall understand*) But I want to tell you—

RUTH. (*Determined not to listen*) I don't want to hear anything about it. It doesn't interest me. (*He gives it up with a despairing gesture*) The point is these people have been your life. They are your life.

NEIL. Oh, we'll get out—away from here—abroad somewhere—anywhere.

RUTH. Can a man run away from his life?

NEIL. You don't know what you're saying. You don't know what you're asking of me.

RUTH. Oh, yes, I do! I'm asking the happiness of a child. Now, listen! She is coming to me this afternoon.

NEIL. Yes.

RUTH. Expecting to return the day after tomorrow.

NEIL. Yes.

RUTH. (*With great deliberation*) Well, *she must not—return.*

NEIL. And—and I'm not to see her again?

RUTH. What would be the use?

NEIL. You mean I'm to tell her I'm sending her away for good?

RUTH. As you like. I don't insist on that.

NEIL. Just when she's grown into my life—just when I've realized what I've missed all these years—and what you've had.

RUTH. There's no use talking about it.

NEIL. Doesn't it strike you that you're just the least bit cruel?

RUTH. No. In the end, it's the kindest thing I could do.

NEIL. (*Bitterly*) The kindest thing!

RUTH. Listen, Neil. I came here distressed,

worried, uncertain what I ought to do. It's what I've seen here, that has determined me.

NEIL. (*Coming down*) But I tell you—

RUTH. (*With an accent of finality*) It's no use. I've made up my mind.

NEIL. (*With a sudden burst of defiance*) And suppose I should decide to keep her?

RUTH. Keep her! How can you keep her? The courts have confided her to my care. Don't be absurd!

NEIL. And I'm not to count at all.

RUTH. When a man has made his bed he must lie on it.

NEIL. That's a hard saying.

RUTH. Truth is truth! We're not children.

NEIL. I wish to Heaven we were, for then we might start all over again. (*Takes a quick step toward her*) Are you sure it's too late? Don't you think we might begin again?

RUTH. (*Has a momentary impulse to yield but instantly hardens*) No, Neil. I'm not to be bribed.

NEIL. Bribed!

RUTH. All the years wasted—youth spurned—hopes defeated—all—nothing—Neil, don't be ridiculous.

NEIL. (*Turning away*) Still—~~cold~~.

RUTH. Cold? (*Gives a shrug*) Perhaps. Logical, at least. I must be going. (*She goes slowly to the door, turns and extends her hand in parting*) Good-bye.

NEIL. (*Dumbly, with his back to her*) Good-bye. (*Ruth waits an instant, drops her hand and turns to go. Neil turns to her with his hand extended for the parting, in time to see the door closing. His hand drops and he turns away in dumb grief, as the rumble of distant thunder is heard. He goes to the piano and touches lovingly the hat CYN-*

THIA has left there. A roll of thunder is heard. Struggling to control his emotion he goes up to the door and looks out. Another peal of thunder is heard. After a moment he turns and comes down as BETSY enters at L. He turns his back to her in an endeavor to hide his tears)

BETSY. She's gone!

NEIL. (*Suffering dumbly*) Yes.

BETSY. Well?

NEIL. (*Turning to BETSY—after a pause*) Oh, Betsy, I've got to give her up. I've got to send my little maid away.

BETSY. (*Softly*) Yes, I know.

NEIL. Ruth's right—you're right. Everybody's right but me.

BETSY. (*Following him with her eyes*) My poor Neil!

NEIL. Why, I'd give my life for her and—I can't even fight for her.

BETSY. Fight for her?

NEIL. Oh, my little maid loves me—she loves me. You needn't think I wouldn't have a chance.

(Enter BENNETT at L.)

BENNETT. Captain Hanson, telephoning for orders, Mr. Neil.

NEIL. No orders, Bennett.

BENNETT. Very well, sir. (*As he starts to go, thunder is hear again*)

NEIL. Wait! (*A pause*) Tell him to send the launch ashore for me at nine o'clock tonight.

BENNETT. Yes, sir. Rain or shine, sir?

NEIL. Rain or shine. Tell him we'll sail at sun-up.

BENNETT. Yes, sir.

NEIL. And send my things aboard—just the usual things.

BENNETT. Yes, Mr. Neil. (*He goes out*)

BETSY. (*Anxiously*) Neil—where are you going?

NEIL. Oh, I don't know—what does it matter? Anywhere—I couldn't stand this place without her.

BETSY. But, my dear——

NEIL. (*Interrupting*) Listen, sis. When she goes she's not to know that she's not—coming—back any more.

BETSY. But I don't quite——

NEIL. (*Taking BETSY's hand in his*) Not a word! Not a sign! She mustn't know. If she did, I couldn't bear it. She wouldn't understand. (*Bitterly*) My God! Betsy! Do you think I can tell my little maid she's being sent away so that she won't be poisoned by the air her father breathes. (*The thought of it stifles him and he turns from her. BETSY too is overcome. NEIL struggles to regain control of himself in silence*) I'll leave the place open. Use it as you please. Use it or shut it up, as you like. I don't care whether I ever see it again.

BETSY. What shall I say to her when she finds you've gone away?

NEIL. Say?

BETSY. Or will you send her a message?

NEIL. That's the worst of it. She'll think I've wearied of her—my blessed little maid will think I've tired of her—that I've deliberately turned her out of my life. How can I do it?

BETSY. You can say that you've been called away by business.

NEIL. Business! What's the business that could separate me from her? There is no such business and well she knows it. My God! Sis, you don't

realize what she means to me. Why, only a month ago it seemed to me that my life was done—only a month ago—and then she came—like a blessed little angel of light—she breathed upon the ashes of my youth—my heart leaped up, like the poet's when he beheld a rainbow in the sky—And now—and now! (*Thunder again. The storm comes nearer. The room grows a little darker*)

BETSY. (*Much affected, goes up and closes the c. door*) I hope it won't rain till she gets to the station.

NEIL. (*Sits on settee*) And don't you think she isn't going to suffer too.

BETSY. (*Coming down to NEIL—placing her hand on his shoulder in gentle sympathy*) Oh, I know! I know!

NEIL. Oh, you can't guess how close we've grown together—all the sacred little glimpses of her heart she's given me—all her little hopes and fears. All—

BETSY. (*After a pause, goes to the door c. L. and turns to NEIL*) It's nearly time. I'll see if the motor is here, unless you'd rather I stayed.

NEIL. (*With his back to audience*) No—no—I'll say good-bye to my little maid alone. (*BETSY goes out with a last look of compassion as he fights for self control that must be his in the approaching farewell. He goes to the mantel at R. and leans heavily on it, gradually getting calmer. Then he comes behind the chair by the table, with his eyes fixed on the door through which CYNTHIA must soon come. The situation, indeed, is a duplicate of that at the end of ACT I, save that there CYNTHIA was to walk into his life and now she is to pass out of it*)

(BENNETT enters leaving door opened, and crosses

*up to c. opening that door. He carries a handbag and is followed by THERESE. As she reaches the c. door CYNTHIA enters and stands by door at L.)*

CYNTHIA. (To THERESE, in French) Attendez moi dans l'automobile, Therese. Je vous suivrai depres. (Closes the door by which she entered)

THERESE. Oui, mademoiselle. (She goes out and BENNETT follows, closing the door behind them)

CYNTHIA. (Drops a small wrist bag on the settee then goes over to NEIL) Well, daddy dear, sorry to have me go?

NEIL. (Has turned away from her to conceal from her any evidence of his grief) Can you ask?

CYNTHIA. (Smiling brightly) But are you? (Gives him one glove to hold while she puts on the other)

NEIL. (Trying to adopt her own cheery attitude) Very.

CYNTHIA. Honestly?

NEIL. Honestly.

CYNTHIA. Honest and true? Black and blue?

(She drops her well-beloved, sunny head upon his breast.)

NEIL. (A little thickly) Honest and true. Black and Blue.

CYNTHIA. Hope to die?

NEIL. (With double meaning) Yes dearest—hope to die.

CYNTHIA. (Wistfully and after a pause—taking a step back) Mayn't I take some message from you to—mother?

NEIL. Why—no, I think not.

CYNTHIA. Oh, please, please, daddy. It would make her so happy.

NEIL. (*With irony and turning his head away*) Would it?

CYNTHIA. Oh, indeed—indeed it would—and me, too.

NEIL. (*Unable to resist her appeal*) Very well—then—say to your mother that I hope she hasn't missed you as much as I am going to. Can you remember that?

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy! As if I couldn't. (*Looks up at him*) And don't look so glum. Why anybody'd think you weren't ever going to see me again as long as you lived. Do smile again, daddy. (*She places her arm around his shoulder and with her left hand takes his face and smilingly tries to coax the smile from him, while he bravely tries to please her*) Haven't I told you over and over again how much I love you when you smile? (*As he smiles, she steps back to admire her work of triumph*) That's better, daddy dear, but, still—not so very much. Now, daddy, that isn't one of your very best smiles.

NEIL. Isn't it?

CYNTHIA. No—it's only a kind of second best smile, I guess.

NEIL. I'm sorry, dear—but it's the best I can do just now.

CYNTHIA. (*Seizing the lapel of his coat and shaking a monitorv finger at him*) Oh, you dearest daddy in all the world, don't be a silly or you'll have me crying in a minute. (*She buries her face against his shoulders while he struggles to maintain his grip on himself, places hand on her shoulder and quietly hushes her ,after which she continues brightly and cheerily*) Why, just think it's only for two days . I'll be back bright and early Thurs-

day morning and you'll meet me at the station, won't you?

NEIL. Why not? Why not?

CYNTHIA. And will you telephone me tomorrow?

NEIL. I'm not sure about that but—you'll hear from me.

CYNTHIA. (*A pause of puzzlement*) Oh, it's going to be a surprise. You're coming to town yourself! (*Delighted at the idea*)

NEIL. (*Turning away and almost breaking*) No—no—dear—I'm not coming.

CYNTHIA. (*After a brief pause*) Oh! Well then—other glove, please. (*She holds out her hand for it, he turns, and tries to smile at her*)

NEIL. Must you have it?

CYNTHIA. Of course!

NEIL. Let me keep it—please.

CYNTHIA. Oh, you silly daddy, of course I will. Wouldn't you like the other one, too?

NEIL. No, I'll send you a whole box of them, instead.

CYNTHIA. Send them? What for, when I'm coming back so soon? Why, I wouldn't have time to get them. (*She breaks into a laugh which he forces himself to join*)

NEIL. Of course not, what a stupid daddy I am.

CYNTHIA. And remember—Thursday morning—if you don't meet me at the station, I shan't kiss you when I see you.

NEIL. Thursday morning—(*On the verge of a breakdown*) Yes—yes—but you must—must hurry along—you—you haven't much—(*He turns away*)

CYNTHIA. (*Goes to him quickly*) Why, daddy dear, you're not crying!

NEIL. (*Pulling himself together and laughs bravely through his tears*) Crying! What non-

sense! But I don't want you to miss your train.

CYNTHIA. All right daddy dear, will you feed my birds?

NEIL. Of course.

CYNTHIA. And take care of Gyp and see that she has plenty of exercise?

NEIL. Yes, indeed.

CYNTHIA. And make McPherson keep the horrid bugs off my pretty roses till I come back?

NEIL. (*In anguishh, averting his face that she may not see his tears and gently forcing her back*) Till you come—child—child—you must hurry. (*She goes to settee for the bag, then turns to him brightly*)

CYNTHIA. All right, daddy dear. I'm ready now. Kiss me. (*He takes her in his arms, crushing her in the embrace. He kisses her repeatedly and holding her head close, he lifts his agonized face, and raises his hand to his brow to steady himself. When he has quite mastered himself—he again kisses her and speaks*)

NEIL. (*Brokenly*) Good-bye, my little maid, good-bye!

CYNTHIA. (*Breaking from him*) Good-bye! No, indeed, au revoir.

NEIL. (*With a show of laughter*) Yes—yes—that's what I mean, of course. Au revoir, au revoir.

CYNTHIA. Now say what I taught you in French! Daddy! Say you love me.

NEIL. (*Almost choking over the words*) Je t'aime, je t'aime.

CYNTHIA. With all your heart.

NEIL. De tout mon coeur.

CYNTHIA. And you worship me.

NEIL. Je t'adore! Je t'adore.

CYNTHIA. (*Sitting on settee*) Oh, daddy, I believe I'm going to cry now. (*She dabs at her eyes*)

*with her little handkerchief)*

NEIL. (*Quickly going to her and lifting her to her feet*) Cry! Nonsense! What an idea! Why only think—weren't you saying it's only for two days—come now, be off with you.

CYNTHIA. Yes, I know it's silly of me to make such a fuss about it. (*NEIL with his arms around her gradually forces her up to the c. door, CYNTHIA trying to linger all the time, and speaking brightly, while he, feeling himself coming fast to the breaking point, in great distress tries to meet her responses bravely. He keeps his face from her all the while, finally reaches the door and blindly gropes for the knob to open it*) And you'll meet me Thursday morning when I come back?

NEIL. Yes—yes—when you come back.

CYNTHIA. And you won't forget about Gyp?

NEIL. No, I won't forget your Gyp.

CYNTHIA. And all my little birds?

NEIL. Nor your little birds.

CYNTHIA. And my pretty roses? (*She is in the doorway, still looking at him, ignorant of his agony. He has to force her out to close the door*)

NEIL. No—no—I won't forget your little birds and your pretty roses—I won't forget anything—I won't forget. (*At last he succeeds in shutting the door upon her. Then his voice breaks. He leans heavily with his face against the door murmuring brokenly*) I won't forget—I won't—(*His voice dies away in a stifled sob. Again the thunder grumbles, now sharply and nearer than before. The storm is about to break. The beautiful room is almost in twilight as the*

*Curtain slowly falls.*

## ACT III.

SCENE: *The Villa Marchese at Mentone.*

The scene is laid on a bluff overlooking the Riviers, showing the river and coast line running up and off L. The house is set at R. and a little below middle stage distance. It is approached by two steps leading to platform and two steps on R. of platform leading into the door of house. The house is backed by a large pergola running from stage R. c. to behind house and off R. Opposite at L. stage on lower side of house is set a smaller pergola leading off L. Behind this pergola running to L. of c. is part of stone wall. Behind this running from stone wall of pergola and off to L. is another stone wall. Over this wall is seen the top of some poplar trees. A stone bench is set at L. of platform to house, and at c. a table with three chairs. At L. in front of pergola is set a wooden bench. The furniture is of the prevailing garden styles, green in color. A sofa pillow is on lower steps at L. on which BETSY sits, and a work basket is on table. Some letters are on stone bench for BETSY to open. The chair R. of table is a large arm-chair with a smaller arm-chair at back of table. Potted plants are set around the stage at appropriate places. The time is a little later than mid-afternoon and mellow sunlight floods the scene.

At rise CYNTHIA, BETSY and RUTH are on stage, CYNTHIA at back looking off R. RUTH seated R. of table and busy on some embroidery.

BETSY seated r. on the steps engaged with some letters.

BETSY. Ruth dear, I've a letter from Mrs. Fenwick.

RUTH. Isn't she the woman who used to wear those extraordinary gowns. (*Looking at CYNTHIA*)

BETSY. (*Also looking cautiously at CYNTHIA*) Yes. Did you ever hear what Jimmy Judson said about her back?

RUTH. I don't remember.

BETSY. He said her back was the only thing that made grand opera possible. (*Looks cautiously at CYNTHIA*) Ruth dear. Doesn't it strike you that our Cynthia is a little—well, a little melancholy, considering the circumstances?

RUTH. Yes, dear—I—I've noticed it.

BETSY. I wondered of you had.

RUTH. Yes, dear, of course it's Neil. She never speaks of him and yet—and yet I know there's never a day that she's not thinking-thinking.

BETSY. And you—dear?

RUTH. (*Rising*) Don't, please don't.

BETSY. (*Going to RUTH*) It's only—only because I love you both, you know, and I thought—now that so long a time had passed—so long as you knew that Neil—well, I hoped that if he were to come to you again, you might perhaps be glad to see him.

RUTH. He'll never come again.

BETSY. But—if he should—if he should—

(*Pause broken by CYNTHIA who comes down to them.*)

CYNTHIA. Oh, dear, I don't see why Arthur doesn't come.

BETSY. Is he late today?

CYNTHIA. No-o-o but I hoped he'd be early.  
(*Sitting L. of table*) Sometimes he is.

BETSY. Oh dear, I know, I know—(*RUTH comes behind CYNTHIA placing her arm around her*) However early he appeared it would still seem late to you. (*Sitting R. of table*) But I've a letter from Mrs. Fenwick. She tells me that Alice is to be married. I think you met her when you were home.

CYNTHIA. Oh yes, that girl with all the dimples.

BETSY. She's going to marry Mr. Dalrymple, the wedding is to be next month at their place at Narragansett Pier.

CYNTHIA. Yes, she'll be married a long time before me, won't she?

RUTH. Evidently, since you won't set a date for your own wedding.

CYNTHIA. Well, I won't. I've told Arthur that I'd never marry anybody else, but I won't marry him unless daddy says yes. (*RUTH turns away*) Oh aunty, why doesn't daddy come?

BETSY. You know very well that I haven't been able to reach him; ever since that Costa Rican affair, the Roamer hasn't stayed in any port any longer than was necessary to take on supplies.

CYNTHIA. Do you think he would come if he knew?

BETSY. I don't know.

CYNTHIA. Wasn't that splendid of him, all that fighting?

BETSY. Nobody who knew him would have expected anything less.

CYNTHIA. I know—but I love to think of it all the same.

RUTH. What was it the newspapers said he told them?

CYNTHIA. That if they didn't give up the ring-leader to the American Consul he'd make the town look like a—like a second-hand hat. Oh, wasn't it splendid, mother?

RUTH. Yes, dear.

CYNTHIA. Arthur says it was the talk of the Embassy at Paris for weeks.

(NED FELLOWS *enters from house at R.*)

FELLOWS. Good afternoon, ladies. Therese told me I'd find you here. (*FELLOWS first shakes hands with BETSY, RUTH crossing to shake hands with him*)

RUTH. Why Ned!

FELLOWS. (*Crossing to CYNTHIA*) And how is the light of the household?

CYNTHIA. Burning brightly, thank you.

BETSY. Yes, because well trimmed.

FELLOWS. Weren't expecting me back from Paris so soon, were you?

BETSY. No, not quite.

FELLOWS. Well, the fact is, something unexpected turned up, and—er—well, I've got something to talk to you ladies, if—(*Hesitating, and looking at CYNTHIA*)

RUTH. Cynthia darling, perhaps you won't mind going back to that pleasing employment of yours.

CYNTHIA. (*Going up c.*) I don't mind at all. (*Smiles at FELLOWS and exits off L.*)

RUTH. And I've some business with you, too. (*Sitting at L. of table. BETSY sits also*)

FELLOWS. (*Sitting behind table*) Very well, then, let's get yours done first. What is it?

RUTH. It's about Cynthia.

FELLOWS. Cynthia!

RUTH. In preparation for her marriage.

FELLOWS. (*Scenting trouble*) Oh!

RUTH. I have decided to settle upon her half of everything I own.

FELLOWS. (*In great dismay*) Eh?

RUTH. Yes, it's a thing I always meant to do and now the time has come.

FELLOWS. (*Rising in confusion*) Well—er—but—er—

RUTH. (*Looking at him*) Surely there's no difficulty about that, is there?

FELLOWS. (*Floundering helplessly*) Oh—er—no—I suppose not.

RUTH. Well, then, suppose you just go ahead and arange it. Of course, there'll be a lot of papers for me to sign, I suppose.

FELLOWS. Papers? Oh—er—yes—yes, lots of papers.

RUTH. Well then, now that settles my business.

FELLOWS. Yes, that settles it.

RUTH. What's yours?

FELLOWS. (*Sitting behind table*) Well, it's this. I've taken rather a liberty.

RUTH. Eh?

FELLOWS. Now, you mustn't be cross with me. I've asked the American Consul at Lyons to call here this afternoon.

BETSY. What for?

FELLOWS. To meet Neil.

RUTH and BETSY. (*Rising*) Neil!

FELLOWS. (*Rising*) The Roamer reached Naples the day before yesterday.

RUTH. (*Very much affected*) Really, Ned, I'm afraid—

FELLOWS. (*Quickly, realizing the effect of his abruptness*) Now listen, please, you dear ladies, just a moment. I know it seems abrupt, but I didn't have time to ask you. I was afraid Neil

would get away if I waited, so I acted on my own responsibility.

BETSY. But I don't quite see—

FELLOWS. It's about that Costa Rican scrap at Casa Bella, when Neil behaved so well. The State Department at Washington has been trying to reach him ever since it happened—and asked me to inform them when he reached France. I did so and wired Neil to come here and now comes the Consul with some sort of a flattering message from his chief.

BETSY. Oh Ruth, isn't that splendid?

RUTH. Yes, dear.

FELLOWS. Of course I know, dear lady, that it may be a little embarrassing to you to see him but you needn't if you don't wish to, or say the word and I'll go to the station and turn him back. (*Turning to go as if to carry out his statement*) It isn't too late—

BETSY. (*Pleadingly*) Oh! Ruth.

RUTH. (*After hesitating*) No, Ned, let him come, if he will. (*BETSY turns to RUTH with a little gasp of joy*)

FELLOWS. (*Greatly relieved*) Ah good, good, that's best, that's best, I'm sure.

RUTH. But are you sure he'll come?

FELLOWS. Yes indeed. Here's his telegram. Would you like to see it? (*Takes telegram from his pocket, opens it for her and offers it to RUTH, who takes it—looks at it—and then walks L. into the pergola and off*)

BETSY. (*Quietly, as RUTH is going off, turning to NED*) Oh, Ned! Ned! That is just too splendid! How did you ever dare to do it?

FELLOWS. Splendid, is it? (*Looks off after RUTH*) My dear Betsy, you don't know.

BETSY. Eh?

FELLOWS. My dear friend, there's the very deuce to pay.

BETSY. What?

FELLOWS. Did you hear what she said to me about settling half of her estate on Cynthia.

BETSY. Of course.

FELLOWS. Well, she hasn't got any estate.

BETSY. What!

FELLOWS. Not a nickel.

BETSY. Ned!

FELLOWS. Not a stiver.

BETSY. What *are* you talking about?

FELLOWS. She hasn't had a cent for over a year except what Neil has paid her secretly through me.

BETSY. But I don't in the least——

FELLOWS. It's all that rascally brother of hers.

BETSY. Eh?

FELLOWS. When he tried to shoot himself, he owed her estate over \$200,000. Neil went on paying the income. All the rest of it went into some of Dick's fake mines. Well, Neil made that good too.

BETSY. (*Greatly surprised*) Ned!

FELLOWS. Oh, I don't mean that he made good the principal. He just went on paying the dividends and interest so that she never knew the difference.

BETSY. Poor old Neil!

FELLOWS. And now she comes with this new scheme of hers. Gad! It puts me in a nice hole.

BETSY. (*Decisively*) Well, there's only one thing to be done—she's got to be told.

FELLOWS. Hang it all! yes.

BETSY. At once.

FELLOWS. (*Turning in surprise*) Now!

BETSY. At once.

FELLOWS. Before she sees Neil?

BETSY. Yes—don't you see, if she didn't know, what a false position it would place her in. Oh, she ought to have been told—she ought.

FELLOWS. Yes, but I promised Neil I wouldn't tell her.

BETSY. But you told me.

FELLOWS. Yes, but I didn't promise not to tell you.

BETSY. And I didn't promise not to tell her. Why, I couldn't be responsible for keeping it from her. There's no good to come from trying to run somebody's else's life. I tell you, Ned, the minute any of us little atoms begins to play that he is God, there's some kind of a big smash not far ahead.

FELLOWS. (*After a moment's hesitation*) Well, let's get the blamed thing over with. I wish I had told her long ago, in spite of Neil. (*Looks off L. and calls*) Ruth! I say Ruth!

RUTH. (*In the distance*) Yes—

FELLOWS. If you please.

RUTH. (*Coming nearer*) All right. (*Enters expectantly*) What is it? Has he come?

FELLOWS. (c.) Not yet—but you see—

RUTH. Eh!

BETSY. Yes, you see—er—

RUTH. What do I see?

BETSY. We—we've got something to tell you.

FELLOWS. (*Eagerly, pushing BETSY forward*) Yes, yes. *Betsy's* got something to tell you.

RUTH. Eh?

BETSY. (*Pushing FELLOWS forward*) Yes, yes. *Ned's* got something to tell you.

RUTH. (*Rising. Thinking she is about to hear a sentimental confidence*) Well, bless your heart. I'm delighted! And to think I never once guessed your little secret. How sly you've been about it!

FELLOWS (*Dumfounded*) Eh?

BETSY. (*Much amused and laughing*) No, no,  
it isn't that—

RUTH. No?

BETSY. No—it isn't at all that sort of thing.

FELLOWS. (*Turns to BETSY, suddenly seeing the point and breaking into a laugh*) Oh. No, I'm sorry, awfully sorry, but it isn't at all that sort of thing.

RUTH. Well, then?

BETSY. It's something quite different.

FELLOWS. Something very serious.

BETSY. Ruth, I've got to tell you something—  
something you won't like to hear.

RUTH. Don't be afraid. I'm used to that.

(They all sit)

BETSY. I've got to go back a long way—back to  
an unhappy time.

RUTH. That's never so very far back.

BETSY. To the time when you and Neil—

RUTH. (*Turning from her*) Oh, please—

BETSY. (*Placing her arm around her*) When  
you and Neil parted—when poor Dick—

RUTH. (*Pleadingly*) Oh, my dear—

BETSY. I must, dear. That's where it begins.

RUTH. All right, if you must.

BETSY. Dick was then your trustee. He owed  
you a large sum.

RUTH. Owed me? He never borrowed a dollar  
of me in his life.

BETSY. No he didn't borrow it—he *took* it!

RUTH. (*Greatly surprised*) Betsy!

BETSY. Ask Ned. (RUTH looks at FELLOWS)

FELLOWS. It's true.

RUTH. Oh it can't be—it can't be true—Oh, I  
can't believe it. (Turning to FELLOWS) Are you  
sure there's no mistake?

FELLOWS. Certain.

RUTH. Then—but I never missed the money—why wasn’t I told? Where’s the money been coming from? Where—?

BETSY. Ruth dear, please don’t make it any harder for me than it has to be. I’ll tell you everything, everything, if you’ll let me.

RUTH. All right, dear, go on please.

BETSY. There then was a time after Dick went West when you invested in some mines that he was interested in.

RUTH.. Yes, yes, of course—he said it would help him and—I wanted to help him—don’t you see?

BETSY. Yes, I know, dear; of course you did. But, unfortunately—they—they weren’t very good mines.

RUTH. And the money’s gone—is that it?

BETSY. Yes—that’s it.

RUTH. Oh, poor old Dick—

(FELLOWS rises and turns disgustedly.)

FELLOWS. (*Under his breath*) Poor Old Hell!

RUTH. (*Mistaking FELLOWS’ attitude to be one of sympathy*) And he asked you to come and tell me?

FELLOWS. Well no, not exactly.

RUTH. How long have you known about the mines?

FELLOWS. Nearly a year.

RUTH. Nonsense. (*Rising*) Why, I’ve been getting these dividend checks all the time.

BETSY. (*Rises*) Yes dear, from Ned.

RUTH. But how—why—I can’t understand it at all. Ruined properties don’t go on paying dividends, do they?

FELLOWS. Not as a rule.

BETSY. No, dear, no they don't.

RUTH. (*Turning to FELLOWS*) Then, where's the money been coming from? (*He turns away from her—she looks to BETSY who avoids her gaze and slowly begins to realize the truth*) Not—not—Neil!!

BETSY. Yes, dear.

RUTH. (*A step to BETSY*) Neil! (*Pause*) Look here, Ned—I've got to get this straight. You're absolutely sure there's no mistake.

FELLOWS. I wish there were.

RUTH. Then all this money, even the money I gave Dick—to put in his mines—it wasn't my own at all?

FELLOWS. Not—not much of it.

RUTH. (*FELLOWS turns away with a gesture of assent*) And you knew it all the time? Why didn't you tell me?

FELLOWS. How could I? Neil forbade it.

RUTH. And now I've nothing to give my darling, and I've given her nothing all these years. It's all been his—his! (*FELLOWS turns away as RUTH chokes down a sob*)

BETSY. Dearest—you must be brave, because soon he's coming.

RUTH. No, no, Betsy, I couldn't meet him now—that's the worst of it. Oh, Betsy darling. It hurts—it hurts. (*Exits into the house. BETSY goes up with her and stands on platform watching her off*)

BETSY. Poor Ruth! Poor thing!

FELLOWS. Yes, yes, well there's only one good thing about the whole confounded business. It's off my chest, at least.

BETSY. Well, I can tell you one thing. It's a long way from being off mine—I'm beginning to think we've made a mistake.

FELLOWS. And there's another thing. Neil doesn't know that any of you ladies are here.

BETSY. What?

FELLOWS. No. I wired him simply to come to the Villa Marchese.

BETSY. But—

FELLOWS. I was afraid he wouldn't come—if I told him.

(Enter THERESE, standing up by the door, and GILMORE who comes immediately down the steps.)

THERESE. Monsieur Gilmore! (*As FELLOWS sees GILMORE he goes to meet him with great delight. THERESE retires when GILMORE passes her*)

FELLOWS. Ah, Mr. Gilmore, glad to see you. So you had no trouble in finding the place?

GILMORE. None, thanks. Everybody knew the Villa Marchese.

FELLOWS. Good—good—I was afraid perhaps you might—(*Turns to BETSY*) Miss Sumner, allow me to present Mr. John Carpenter Gilmore, our American Consul at Lyons.

BETSY. How do you do, Mr. Gilmore?

GILMORE. Delighted to mee you, ma'am, delighted.

FELLOWS. Well, you're here before Mr. Sumner, you see!

GILMORE. Hasn't come yet, eh?

FELLOWS. (*Taking out his watch*) No, not yet.

GILMORE. Well, I haven't any time-clock to punch. That's the best thing about this Consul job. You're a long way from your boss. Of course, Miss Sumner knows why I am here.

BETSY. Oh, yes. (*Sitting R. of table and inviting GILMORE to be seated*)

GILMORE. (*Seated*) I am going to wave the

Stars and Stripes awhile and then I'm going to make a regular Fourth of July oration, beginning with my "Fellow Citizens"—and ending with—er—

BETSY. And ending with nervous prostration—

GILMORE. Maybe so, ma'am, maybe so. Well, being under orders from the Department to convey to Mr. Sumner its distinguished appreciation, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera—I'm going to do all I threatened.

BETSY. As bad as that.

GILMORE. And if somebody don't stop me, I'm liable to sing "The Star Spangled Banner" before I'm through.

BETSY. Don't be alarmed. Somebody'll stop you.

GILMORE. The worst of it is, I'm blamed if I think I can remember my speech. Never made a speech in my life. Hatchets are my line.

FELLOWS and BETSY. Hatchets?

GILMORE. Yes, siree. Before I took this Consul job, I guess I had about the best little hatchet factory ever built in South Braintree, Mass. But the hatchet trust bought me out and so—

BETSY. And so you burried the hatchet?

GILMORE. Very good, ma'am, very good. Then I moved on to foreign parts. I asked for a Consulship in England, but following on old custom, the State Department sent me to France, because I can't speak French.

BETSY. I see; it helps you to keep out of trouble. Is that it?

GILMORE. That's the idea, ma'am, the very idea.

(SUMNER appears in doorway—and is first seen by  
FELLOWS.)

FELLOWS. Neil!

BETSY. (Rising joyfully) Neil!

NEIL. Betsy! Why I had no idea! I thought you were in Paris!

BETSY. Ned told me you were coming!

NEIL. And Ruth and Cynthia! (BETSY *nods in assent*)

FELLOWS. Neil, old man, how are you?

NEIL. And you, Ned? (*Shaking hands*)

FELLOWS. Splendid! Splendid! But oh, Neil, allow me, this is Mr. John Carpenter Gilmore, our American Consul at Lyons.

NEIL. Mr. Gilmore?

GILMORE. Honored, sir, I am sure. Highly honored!

FELLOWS. Mr. Gilmore is here especially to see you.

NEIL. (*Surprised*) Me?

GILMORE. Yes, Mr. Sumner, on behalf of the State Department at Washington. (*A little important*)

NEIL. Nonsense!

GILMORE. Mr. Sumner, sir. (*Realizes he is about to make a speech, turns to FELLOWS a little hesitatingly—giving his hat to FELLOWS to hold*) Here comes that blanked speech, now, I guess. (*Turns up, stands L. of table*) Mr. Sumner, sir, I am under instructions from the State Department at Washington to express personally to you, sir, its hearty appreciation of the distinguished service rendered by you and the men of your crew to the American Consul at Cosa Bella, Costa Rica, on the 19th day of March last on the occasion of an uprising when the life of said Consul was imperiled and the property of the Consulate placed in jeopardy by—ah—an incipient rebellion. I am—

NEIL. (*Smiling*) Nonsense—why—

GILMORE. In the name of our glorious country,

don't stop me or I'll never get going again. Where was I?

BETSY. Incipient rebellion—

GILMORE. Madam, I thank you. Ah—er—oh, yes, the ah—Department understands sir, that you took your crew ashore and at the risk of your own personal safety subdued the malcontents, rescued the American Consul, and reduced the rebels to a condition—of ah—to a state of I should say—of—er—innocuous desuetude. (*Looks proudly about for applause*) For which distinguished service the Department hereby expresses its profound appreciation and—ah—gratitude. And oh—speaking as I do in behalf of the Department, ah—er—(*Forgets his lines*) Speaking as I do in behalf—er—that is to say, speaking—blame it all, I knew I'd forget it. Here—(*Hands NEIL a huge, heavily sealed document*) I'm ordered to give you this.

BETSY. Oh, Neil, we're so proud of you.

NEIL. But I tell you it's the most utter nonsense.

GILMORE. Ah, sir, you are too modest.

NEIL. But this thing was a joke, I tell you. A handful of town loafers go on a spree, steal a few rusty muskets and half a dozen broken swords, smash a few of the Consulate windows, and now, lo and behold it's a full-fledged rebellion!

BETSY. I won't have you talk so, Neil. You know it was perfectly splendid of you.

FELLOWS. You ought to have seen the papers, Neil.

NEIL. But the thing's ridiculous. I tell you I've seen a better fight at a football game.

GILMORE. Your sentiments do you credit, Mr. Sumner, but it won't go down. The Department's information is very complete.

BETSY. (*Triumphantly*) There—you see!

NEIL. But it's quite too absurd—they ran like rabbits. Why, I laughed till I cried.

GILMORE. Didn't you threaten to bombard the town?

NEIL. Yes—with the yacht's saluting cannon—about as big as my arm—and nothing in it but powder—and they quit like sheep. Why the whole thing was just a lark.

BETSY. Oh Neil, I think it's just too bad of you.

GILMORE. My dear Miss Sumner, 'twas ever thus. Self-depreciation is ever the hall-mark of your true hero. (*Taking out his watch and turning to shake hands with FELLOWS*) Well, I must be off.

BETSY. Mayn't we offer you some refreshment before you go?

GILMORE. Madam, I thank you, but there's a train I can just about make if I hustle, and it's quite important that I reach home tonight. (*Shaking hands with her*)

NEIL. Ah—business of State, I suppose?

GILMORE. Yes siree—the married state—my wife! Well, sir, it has been a real honor, and a genuine pleasure to meet you. (*Shaking hands with NEIL*)

NEIL. Thank you.

GILMORE. And if you'll allow me, I'll send you a copy of the speech I would have made if I could have remembered it. It's not so bad.

NEIL. The undelivered speeches are always the best.

GILMORE. Well, good-bye folks. (*Turning on the steps*) and once more in the name of our glorious country—where's my hat? (*FELLOWS who has been holding the hat unconsciously passes it to BETSY, who passes it to NEIL, who passes it to GIL-*

MORE) Well, folks, good-bye, good-bye, good-bye!  
(*Exits into the house*)

NEIL. Well, Ned, what does this all mean?

FELLOWS. My dear fellow, I know you're entitled to all sorts of explanations, and you shall have them, all in good time.

(CYNTHIA enters at rear, running down to NEIL.)

CYNTHIA. Daddy! Oh, Daddy!

NEIL. Cynthia! Bless your little heart!

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy! Daddy! I thought you were never coming. Why didn't you—

NEIL. Hush, hush, hush! Well, Ned!

FELLOWS. Well, it's rather an awkward thing to explain just at the moment.

BETSY. Cynthia, dear, don't you think you might

---

CYNTHIA. No, I don't. I won't either. I won't let him out of my sight. Do you think I've forgotten the last time I left him? (*She is unable to go on*)

BETSY. Come, Ned.

FELLOWS. (*Going*) We won't be far away when you want us. (*They go off L.*)

NEIL. (*His arms again about her*) My little maid—quite grown up.

CYNTHIA. Do you love me still, daddy?

NEIL. Ah ma cherie, je t'aime, je t'aime.

CYNTHIA. Oh you remembered—you remembered—

NEIL. Je t'adore.

CYNTHIA. With—with all your heart?

NEIL. De tout mon coeur. (*She slips into his arms again*)

CYNTHIA. But, daddy, dear, I couldn't under-

stand—I couldn't see—why—why you didn't come to say good-bye?

NEIL. Did you want me to break my heart twice?

CYNTHIA. Ah then—then all the time, that day I left you in the thunder storm—you—you knew all the time that I wasn't coming back any more?

NEIL. Yes, dearest, I knew.

CYNTHIA. (*She realizes at once the pity of his position. A new wave of tenderness sweeps over her. She looks towards the house and then turns back to NEIL*) Don't you think you might tell me?

NEIL. Tell you what, dearest?

CYNTHIA. What it all means?

NEIL. No, dear, I couldn't—not now.

CYNTHIA. Not when I'm quite grown up? (*He shakes his head. She sits r. of table*) And how are all my pretty flowers—oh, but you don't know, do you?

NEIL. (*Sitting opposite to her*) Oh, yes. Bennett writes that your garden is in splendid shape, that the roses will be blooming within a month.

CYNTHIA. Oh, daddy, shan't I—shan't I ever see them again?

(SUMNER, sharply stricken, rises and turns away.)

NEIL. (*Thickly*) I'll ring Ned Fellows' neck for this.

CYNTHIA. (*Rising*) Oh—to think I'd forgotten it!

NEIL. (*Turns to her*) Eh!

CYNTHIA. I've got something to tell you—about me—something ver-ee important.

NEIL. What can it be?

CYNTHIA. (*Very shyly*) Haven't they told you?

NEIL. Not a word.

CYNTHIA. Lean down your ear, I want to whisper it. (*He bends over her, she whispers in his ear*)

NEIL. (*He raises his head slowly then, placing his hand under her chin raising her face gently*) So soon!

CYNTHIA. (*Anxiously*) Aren't you—aren't you glad?

NEIL. (*After a pause*) What's his name?

CYNTHIA. His name is—

NEIL. Stop! Don't you dare tell me it's Lysander!

CYNTHIA. You remembered that, too; no, it isn't Lysander. It's Arthur—Arthur Quincy Graham.

NEIL. Arthur Graham—yes, I remember him—I've known his people all my life. And to think—

CYNTHIA. Oh, don't you like him? Because, because if you don't, I won't marry him at all. I've told him so. (*Delighted for an instant at her own power*) And oh, he's so frightened. Oh, do—do like him, daddy dear, you must! You must! (*Taking his arm and shaking it vigorously*)

NEIL. (*Turning to her*) Do you love him very much? (*CYNTHIA looks at him shyly, then buries her face on his breast*) Of course, he's not fit to tie your blessed shoe-strings, but, he's a splendid fellow all the same.

CYNTHIA. (*Breaking away delightedly*) Oh, daddy, could you—will you see him, and—and, tell him it's all right? He's awfully nervous!

NEIL. A little later, dear. I—I must get used to it all first.

CYNTHIA. (*Goes up and looks off along the shore line*) He—he usually comes along about this time of day. He's on a holiday from the Embassy, you know, and perhaps he's in sight—

NEIL. (*Playfully*) Perhaps! Of course he is, confound him!

CYNTHIA. Yes—there he is—just coming round the cliff. (*She waves her handkerchief*) No—he doesn't see me yet—oh daddy, do come and look! (*He stands beside her*) See! There! (*Pointing off*)

NEIL. Goodness! Isn't he handsome?

CYNTHIA. (*Turning to him, reproachfully*) Oh! A half a mile away! Now daddy, you're teasing me! (*They start down as RUTH enters from house and comes down the steps*)

NEIL. No, dear, I'm not teasing you.

CYNTHIA. Yes, you are, daddy. Yes, you are! (*CYNTHIA sees her mother and rushes to her, and takes her hands in a tumult of delight, now between RUTH and NEIL*) Oh, mother, dear! Daddy says it's all right! Isn't it splendid! Isn't it? (*She stops, transfixed by the look her father and mother exchange. She turns and looks at her father, and then back to her mother*)

RUTH. (*Tenderly*) Perhaps you'd better leave us, dear. (*CYNTHIA kisses her mother. Goes to NEIL. He puts his arms about, lets her go and she goes out at rear*)

NEIL. (*As she goes*) It's all right, my little maid, it's all right! (*Coming down c.*) And so before very long our little maid is going to leave you, too!

RUTH. Yes.

NEIL. When that time comes, I am afraid you will be rather lonely.

RUTH. Yes—I don't know quite how I shall get on without her!

NEIL. Oh! I know what it is, I know!

RUTH. (*Sitting*) Neil, there are things to be settled between us.

NEIL. (*Sitting l. of table*) There are indeed!

RUTH. I mean about the money.

NEIL. Money? What money?

RUTH. Your money that I thought was mine.

NEIL. He has told you? Ned has told you?

RUTH. No, not Ned!

NEIL. It must have been Ned, no one else knew.

RUTH. It makes no difference.

NEIL. Well, I hope you're going to be sensible about it. I hope you won't let it make any difference!

RUTH. Not make any difference? Neil do you think I have no pride?

NEIL. No, Ruth, I never thought that.

RUTH. Oh, Neil, you had no right to treat me like a child. You had no right to keep me in the dark. Oh, it wasn't fair, it wasn't kind.

NEIL. It was kindly meant.

RUTH. But to let me go on all these years, thinking myself independent, only to find out at last, that I have been living on your charity.

NEIL. Ruth!

RUTH. And now just when I had planned to do something for my darling, something that she would never, never forget, now I find that I have nothing whatever to give her, nothing in all the world.

NEIL. You can give her everything I have.

RUTH. And it would still be yours!

NEIL. No, no, that's not true, it would be yours. Long before there was any blessed Cynthia, to bind us together, I gave you all I had in the world. You gave it back to me. But I have never taken it—never.

RUTH. (*Turning from him*) Oh, please, please!

NEIL. Listen Ruth, for it may be the last time I shall ever speak to you. You may have heard that sometimes when a man is drowning, his whole

life will pass before him in swift review. I feel something like that drowning man. Do you remember a September night on a certain moonlight cliff? I am sure you do. That is where it all began, and you must remember, too, the many very happy years that followed. Until one day, I broke a promise that I had made to you. There followed on its heels something very near a tragedy. There was a scandal. The town rang with it, people talked and gossiped, it stung you to the quick! You nursed your grievance, you fed your pride upon your injury until your pride grew bigger than your love, and then you sentenced me to banishment. That was wrong, but in my turn I too, nursed my pride and held my tongue. As the days went by I tried to fill my life with other things to help me to forget. All sorts of things, foolish I admit, but remember—I had nothing left me but my pride. And you! Well, you had Cynthia! What I should have done was to have given you no rest until I had shown you the terrible price we were paying for our pride! Our pride! And what's it mean to you and me today? This pride for which we sacrificed so much! Well, one day when my life was empty and my heart seemed dead, our little maid came back into them both and filled them, with all the beauty of her blessed love and youth, with all the poignant quality of her tender innocence and with memories of the wife and mother who gave her to me, and then in a moment you took them all away.

RUTH. (*Rising, much affected*) Neil, I—only meant—

NEIL. (*Rising also*) No, no, I don't reproach you, but something so big, so true and fine had come into my heart, that when it went away it left an emptiness that nothing else could fill. I had known the substance of life; how could I

go back to the shadow? I didn't! And though my heart is empty still, I promise you, should you come back into it, you'll find it safer, yes, and cleaner too, than it has ever been before. Listen, dear. I am standing at the crest of the hill. The years of a man's life are numbered. Soon I must turn my back to the sunshine and my feet must carry me down the shady side, and somehow it doesn't seem as if I could bear it, to go—alone. (*Her back is turned to him and although she is affected, she does not see that he has come quite close*) Won't you? (*Extending his hand*) Won't you?—(Pauses—after a pause he goes to table, takes his hat and goes to the steps as CYNTHIA comes in and meets him at the foot of the steps)

CYNTHIA. Daddy! You're not going?

NEIL. Yes, dear, I must.

CYNTHIA. (*Turning to her mother*) Oh, mother, must he go? Can't he stay? Mother, dear you're crying! (*CYNTHIA looks perplexedly from one to the other*) Oh, what is it? What is it? I love you both! I want you both! I can't—I can't—be happy without you both! (*Sinks into the chair, sobbing. RUTH and NEIL go to her hurriedly to comfort her*)

RUTH. Oh Cynthia, darling, don't please don't.

NEIL. Oh don't, don't—my little maid—don't—(*He raises her out of chair, his arm around her, turns to RUTH*) And I love you both! I want you both!—I can't be happy without you both! (*Extending his hand to RUTH*) Ruth—(*RUTH turns to him. With one arm about his little maid, his other draws her mother to his breast*)

*The final curtain falls.*

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